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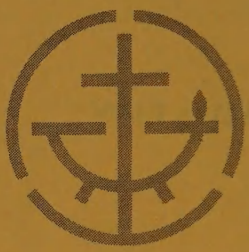

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CHRISTIANITY AND CULTURE.

FOREWORD.

THE boundlessness of the theme of this lecture will be apparent to every reader. There is simply no limit to it. To deal with it adequately an encyclopædic knowledge would be needed and many bulky books would need to be written. The author has tried to deal with some of the confirmations of the truth which have appealed to him. Each reader will be able to amplify the evidence and to enrich it.

The book has been specially written in the interests of the young people in the churches, to remind them of the unique place Jesus fills in the thought and homage of the world.

That the Spirit of God may use this lecture to promote faith and to inspire devotion in Him whose Name is above every name is the Author's sincere prayer.

THE TWENTY-THIRD HARTLEY LECTURE:

Christianity and Culture

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WITHDRAWN

BY

JOHN G. BOWRAN

("RAMSAY GUTHRIE").

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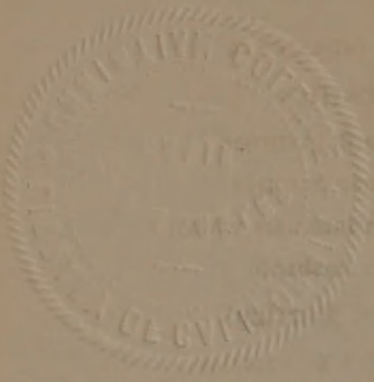

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This Book is dedicated to

Lady Hartley

in admiration and gratitude
for her life-long devotion
to the wide human interests which
inspired her husband

(Sir William Hartley)

the Founder of this Lectureship.

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"OUR truth stands on its own evidence, but it has its connections with all the truth that men are learning so wonderfully on every side."

Dr. Phillips Brooks.

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CHRISTIANITY AND CULTURE.

CHAPTER I.

What is Christianity?

CHRISTIANITY is the most wonderful and beautiful, the supreme and final religion of the world. We have chosen these adjectives designedly and deliberately to express our conviction of the unique preciousness, the absoluteness and the spiritual supremacy and finality of the Christian faith. Because we believe in Christ we believe in Him completely. His is the Name above every name. He has the pre-eminence here and now. All fulness is in Him. The Truth is *in* Jesus. We cannot even admit that the claim is extraordinary. It cannot be extraordinary in the light of the manifestation of the Son of God. If Jesus be what He claims to be, if the Christian consciousness through the centuries has found in Him all that it declares, then Christianity must be the supreme and final religion.

We do not forget the great religions of the world which have held the minds and swayed the souls of millions of men. We believe with Dr. John Watson that each of the world's great faiths has contributed to the knowledge of God and the elevation of the human race. "One has anticipated the self-renunciation of Jesus, another has asserted the mystery of the Eternal, a third has vindicated the unity of God, and a fourth has saturated with filial piety the future rivals of the West. It were unbelief in Divine Providence to deny those faiths a share in the development of humanity. . . . . No reverent Christian will allow himself to despise the religions of the past; no intelligent Christian doubts that his will be the religion of the future."[1]

This is the Christian attitude to the Faiths of the World. We admit the truth of Buddhism, Brahmanism, Mohammedanism and Confucianism. Neither do we forget the errors which obscure their light.

The relation of Christianity to the other world-faiths has been raised in an intensive form in recent discussions. The religio-historical school sees in Christianity but one of the many attempts of man to reach the truth and life of God but suggests that its pre-eminence is not yet proved and its finality doubtful.

The subject has been acute for long on the mission fields, where Christianity is brought into contact and rivalry with the age-long faiths of

[1] *The Mind of the Master*, by John Watson, D.D., pp. 178, 179 (Hodder & Stoughton).

peoples. If Christianity be not the supreme faith how can missions be justified? It has been frankly stated that "Missions are a brutality unless undertaken with the clear consciousness that Christianity surpasses all other religions."[1]

This is the statement of Principal Sydney Cave of Cambridge. The supremacy and finality of the Christian religion he ably and convincingly argues lies in these three facts, (1) that in Christianity we have a true revelation of God, (2) that through Christ we have true communion with God and (3) that in Christ we have true redemption.

The wonder and the beauty of the Christian faith heightens and deepens in the life of believers. It was born in the heart of God. It was conceived in love, evolved in love and its end is love, the love of men with God and man with man.

What, then, to be specific, do we mean by Christianity?

Professor A. S. Peake in his *Christianity; its Nature and its Truth* asks the question: "Which is the Best Religion?" He applies six distinct tests. "Does it secure fellowship with God? Does it combine with this a worthy conception of God and thus secure the reverence and awe for Him which alone make true worship possible? Does it recognize sin as the virulent poison that it is, reckon with and try to overcome it? Does it throw the weight of its influence on the side of morality? Does it serve humanity and work for progress? Does it appeal to man as man, indepen-

[1] *The London Quarterly Review*, October, 1922.

dently of any limitations of race or time, of country or nationality? "[1]

Dr. Peake affirms that Christianity meets all these conditions, that, indeed, it is the only religion that does.

Christianity is unique in three ways.

(1) Christianity is unique as a *Revelation*. The Christian revelation comes not only from what Jesus says but from what Jesus is. *He* is the revelation. The truth is personalised in Him.

He revealed God. We do not really know God until we see Him in Christ. "He who has seen Me has seen the Father,"[2] Jesus affirmed. Everything in God we see in Jesus. His holiness, His pain and shame at the sight of sin, His gentleness and pity, and His sacrificial love are all revealed in Jesus.

> "In Christ I feel the heart of God
> Throbbing from heaven through earth;
> Life stirs again within the clod,
> Renewed in beauteous birth;
> The soul springs up, a flower of prayer,
> Breathing His breath out on the air.
>
> "In Christ I touch the hand of God,
> From His pure height reached down,
> By blessed ways before untrod,
> To lift us to our crown;
> Vict'ry that only perfect is
> Through loving sacrifice like His,"

Lucy Larcom sang and multitudes through Jesus have found and know God. In the face of Jesus we see the face of God; in the voice of Jesus we hear the voice of God; in the love of Jesus we know

[1] *Christianity: its Nature and its Truth*, by A. S. Peake, D.D., pp. 81, 82 (Duckworth & Co.).
[2] *John* xiv. 9, Moffatt's translation.

the love of God. The God we love and worship is the Father whom Jesus revealed. Dr. John Hutton expresses this truth finely: "Wherever He has come to be known, He has sooner or later become merged in God: so that men, as a matter of fact, can no longer conceive of God without seeing Jesus only in a halo of Glory, and can no longer conceive of Jesus except as the Incarnation, the Fulfilment, the Expression in conditions of time and space, of the Intending Will which is coming to itself in the universe of human souls—which we name and adore as God."[1]

Christ's own life was one of filial homage and devotion to the Father's will. He lived as no other had ever lived in the world. He came to do the Father's will, and He had the abiding assurance that in all His ways, in all His words and in all His thoughts He pleased God. Dr. David S. Cairns expresses it thus: "The Axial thought in Jesus, on which all else turns, is that He was dominated and liberated by His enthusiasm for God."[2] . . . . . "This Man has taken His human life and made it luminous with God. One cannot but marvel at the swiftness and security of His sense of God."[3] Auguste Sabatier emphasizes this filial intimacy and identity of Jesus with the Father: "Christ has not given us a critical theory of revelation; He has done what is better; He has given us revelation

[1] *The Authority and Person of our Lord*, by John A. Hutton, M.A., p. 9 (Oliphants, Ltd.).
[2] *The Reasonableness of the Christian Faith*, by D. S. Cairns, D.D., p. 112 (Hodder & Stoughton).
[3] Page 117.

itself—a perfect and permanent revelation; He presents God and man to us so intimately united in all the acts and moments of His inner life, that they become inseparable. The Father acts in His Son, and the Son reveals the Father to all who wish to know Him."[1]

Jesus convicted men of Sin. He was a Conscience as He moved about. It was the Day of Judgment whenever He looked into the eyes of men and women. He not only made them feel sin but filled them with shame. And sin to Him was not anything merely outward; it was in the soul. Nothing more miraculous has ever happened in human life than the confusion the very presence of Christ created in the souls of men. "Come, see a Man which told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?" the woman of Samaria cried. "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" was Peter's distressful confession. When the Scribes and Pharisees brought the woman taken in adultery to Jesus, He said: "He that is without sin among you, let him cast a stone at her!" And this was the amazing sequel. "And when they heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, they went out one by one, beginning at the eldest even unto the last, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing where she was." We are specifically told that, when the Priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, and, in particular, the parable of the wicked husbandmen, "they perceived that He

[1] *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion*, by Auguste Sabatier, p. 43 (Hodder & Stoughton).

spake of them." "To convince the uncleanly of their uncleanliness, it needed not for the Christ to speak. The trump of Doom could not more loudly proclaim their shame than the silence of those terrible eyes."[1]

Jesus declared that He was the Saviour. He gathered into Himself all the Old Testament foreshadowings of a Redeemer and proclaimed that these were all fulfilled in Him. He saved the world by dying for the world. He died in the full conviction that His willing obedience unto death would mean redemption for all mankind. He died on a Cross and the Cross is now the most sacred of symbols, the tender and holy watchword of the Christian Faith. Christianity is the Cross of Jesus.

"The Cross—it takes our guilt away;
It holds the fainting spirit up;
It cheers with hope the gloomy day,
And sweetens every bitter cup.

"The balm of life, the cure of woe,
The measure and the pledge of love,
The sinner's refuge here below,
The angels' theme in heaven above."—*T. Kelly.*

The Saviourhood of Christ is the central fact of His life and work. If we think of Jesus only as a teacher, or as an example, or as the friend of the poor and friendless, without seeing that primarily He is the Redeemer, we miss the very truth of His personality and mission. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins." The world has had many teachers, many men who were ideals, many reformers and

[1] *Wise Men and a Fool*, by Coulson Kernahan, p. 80 (Ward, Lock & Co.).

leaders but only one Saviour has ever appeared. He was unique in the sacrificial love that led Him to the Cross. "He saved others; Himself He cannot save." The words were spoken contemptuously, perhaps only despairingly. They are the very truth. He could not save Himself because He was saving others. Dora Greenwell sings the precious truth:

"He didn't come to judge the world, He didn't come to blame,
He didn't only come to seek; it was to save He came;
And when we call Him Saviour, then we call Him by His Name."[1]

Jesus further revealed the saving will of His Father for every human life. The life He lived in the filial love of God is the life every man can live by faith in Him. "The Son-Life, which was His vital breath, was, He knew, absolutely unique in the world, and He always speaks of His own appearing as the initiation of a new and higher life which is meant for all mankind."[2]

(2) But Christianity is more than a Revelation; it was and is an *Experience*. The Historic Christ is the Living Christ and the truth He brings is the perennial discovery of His presence and the experience of His power. We know God in Him. We have fellowship with God in Him. By Him we are saved, not simply from the guilt of sin, but from the power of sin. We have forgiveness in Him and spiritual redemption. We know that

[1] *Everlasting Love*, by Dora Greenwell, p. 33 (H. R. Allenson, Ltd.).

[2] *Christianity in the Modern World*, by David S. Cairns, D.D., p. 55, (Hodder & Stoughton).

He is the Saviour because we have found pardon and peace through Him. "Forgiveness is not only because of Christ but in Him. There is no such thing in the Gospel as mere forgiveness. There is nothing in the Gospel that is separable from Christ. You cannot have forgiveness without having the Forgiver, without admitting Him to an inward union with your mind and heart and life."[1]

And the forgiveness we have in Christ is a continuous renewal and refinement. Dr. Cairns says: "Some day the New Testament will become a new book, more interesting and more modern than the last book of science, or poetry, or international politics. For it is the faith of historic Christianity that it carries within it nothing less than the power of regeneration, that, with the coming of Christ into the world, there came also a divine energy of good, which, when received by men, can transfigure them."[2]

By faith in Christ we enter into the filial love of God. Jesus is "the firstborn of a great brotherhood,"[3] and now in Him we are the sons of God, thinking His thoughts, sharing His life, loving His ways, alive in God in Christ Jesus. This is the glory of the Christian Gospel. Sabatier affirms that this is of the Essence of Christianity. Christians, he says, "feel that their religious need is entirely satisfied, that God has entered with them, and they with Him, into a relation so intimate and so happy

[1] *The Fact of Christ*, by P. Carnegie Simpson, D.D., p. 163 (Hodder & Stoughton).
[2] *The Reasonableness of the Christian Faith*, p. 139.
[3] *Rom.* viii. 29, Moffatt's translation.

that, in the matter of practical religion, not only can they imagine nothing, but that they can desire nothing above it or beyond."[1]

(3) But Christianity is even more than a Revelation and an Experience; it is an *Inspiration*. "I am controlled by the love of Christ"[2] and the Christian evangel and experience have proved the most powerful dynamic in the life of the world. "The Cross leads generations on," and men have found, in the love of God revealed in Christ and in the life of God conveyed through Christ, the purest motive and the most potent incentive to godly service and to heroic endeavour. "Incentives come from the soul's self," and, when the heart has been pardoned and cleansed in the grace of God in Christ and the will has become identified with the will of God in Christ, men have been impelled to every virtuous way and to every type of humanitarian and Christian service. "For Christ's sake," for the sake of the Name which is above every name, men and women have come to the highest attainments and the most unselfish achievements.

Dr. Cairns has written on "The Finality and Absoluteness of the Christian Revelation." That does not mean that our conception of Christianity is perfect or that our statement is final. We need to remember the wise words of Dr. David Smith. "The Incarnate Word is God's full, and, therefore, His last word to the world. But it does not follow

[1] *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion*, p. 138.
[2] 2 *Cor.* v. 14, Moffatt's translation.

that theological doctrines are final. The revelation in Christ is infinite, but a doctrine is merely a human definition and no human definition can ever compass the infinite truth."[1]

And everything in Christianity centres in Christ. That is the plea in Dr. Carnegie Simpson's vital book, *The Fact of Christ.* "The Foundation of Christianity is Christ." He is "a Fact in History, in Conscience and in Experience."

Robert Browning knew the glory of the Gospel of Christ.

"'What think ye of Christ, friend?'" he makes the Bishop ask the sceptic in *Bishop Blougram's Apology.*

"'What think ye of Christ,' friend? when all's done and said,
Like you this Christianity or not?
It may be false, but will you wish it true?
Has it your vote to be so if it can?"

We know that it is true. Walter Pater was right. Mrs. Humphry Ward tells of a conversation she had with him. It was understood that he had given up all belief in the Christian religion but afterwards his intimate friends knew that something kept drawing him back. Once Mrs. Ward appealed to him, expecting that he would agree with her that "Orthodoxy could not possibly maintain itself long against its assailants." "He shook his head," she said, "and looked rather troubled. 'I don't think so,' he said. Then, with hesitation—'And we don't altogether agree. You think it's all plain. But I can't. There are such

[1] *The Atonement in the Light of History and the Modern Spirit,* by David Smith, D.D., p. 129 (Hodder & Stoughton).

mysterious things. Take that saying, "Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden." How can you explain that? There is a mystery in it—something supernatural.' "[1]

Yes! there is something supernatural in Christianity. It is the perfect and final revelation of God. The Writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews states the truth in its historic form. "Many were the forms and fashions in which God spoke of old to our fathers by the Prophets, but in these days at the end He has spoken to us by a Son—a Son whom He appointed heir of the universe, as it was by Him that He created the world."[2]

Jesus is "the most wonderful personality which has ever drawn breath upon the earth," A. C. Benson reverently declares. He was wonderful in Himself, wonderful in His teachings and in His actions, wonderful in the spirit in which He lived His life among others and in communion with His Father, and most wonderful in the love which made Him willing to suffer in order to save. "My Lord and my God!" we adoringly cry.

This is our conception of Christianity, and it is all found in Christ who is the shining revelation of the Father, the secret of our ever-enriching experience and the undying inspiration to all that is good.

[1] *A Writer's Recollections*, by Mrs. Humphry Ward, pp. 121, 122 (W. Collins, Sons & Co. Ltd.).

[2] *Hebrews* i. 1, 2. Moffatt's translation.

CHAPTER II.

Culture.

CULTURE, like Civilization, is a "vague and elastic word." The word is constantly used but with a great variety of meanings. Mark Pattison in his *Memoirs* states thus his idea of culture. "All my energy was directed upon one end—to improve myself, to form my own mind, to sound things thoroughly, to free myself from the bondage of unreason, and the traditional prejudices which, when I began first to think, constituted the whole of my intellectual fabric."[1] At the end of his *Memoirs* we find him satisfied with his pursuit. "For myself," he says, "I can truly say that daily converse with the poetry and literature of all times, ancient and modern, has been to me its own sufficient reward; the classics have lost for me nothing of their charm; on this very day—New Year's Eve, 1884—I can read Sophocles with greater delight than I ever did."[2]

[1] *Memoirs*, by Mark Pattison, pp. 1, 2 (Macmillan & Co., Ltd.).
[2] Pages 332, 333.

Matthew Arnold was the great apostle of culture, which, in his view, was destined to supersede Christianity. In his *Culture and Anarchy* he rapturously writes : " Culture has one great passion, the passion for sweetness and light. It has one even yet greater—the passion for making them prevail. It is not satisfied till we *all* come to a perfect man."[1]

Chesterton points out the distinctively individual place Matthew Arnold filled. " Against Mills's ' liberty,' and Carlyle's ' strength,' and Ruskin's ' nature ' he set up a new presence and entity which he called ' culture,' the disinterested play of the mind through the sifting of the best books and authorities." Chesterton thought that Culture to Matthew Arnold was sometimes a man or a church, and, when a man, that it was Matthew Arnold. Arnold's distinction lay in the fact that he knew things, he knew things that others did not know. Mere utilitarianism he scorned. Knowledge was the thing above all else to be desired.[2]

Some speak as if culture were the intellectual life exclusively—interest in and the mastery of all branches of science, the knowledge of literature from the earliest to the most recent times, the understanding of the poets and the dramatists, sympathy with and appreciation of the painters and sculptors, the knowledge of and delight in music, all, in short, that appeals to the literary and artistic sides of life. That was the conception

[1] *Culture and Anarchy*, by Matthew Arnold, p.43 (John Murray)
[2] *The Victorian Age in Literature*, by G. K. Chesterton, p. 73 (Williams & Norgate).

of culture in the Rossetti Circle, with certain conspicuous exceptions. It was certainly the view of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. "The picture of Rossetti," Theodore Watts-Dunton says, "that lived in the public mind was that of a poet and painter of extraordinary imaginative intensity and magic, whose personality, as romantic as his work, influenced all who came in contact with him. He was, indeed, the only romantic figure in the imagination of the literary and art world of his time. It seemed as if in his very name there was an unaccountable music."[1]

Undoubtedly in art and poetry he did great things. He inspired in his circle a homage akin to awe but his culture was purely of the mind. He himself lacked the knowledge and experience which alone redeem and glorify life.

We cannot conceive of real culture in this sectional sense. Life is one and the human personality is one. True culture dominates the whole of life and the complete nature. William Hazlitt has a great deal to say about "the learned man," as such. He heads his essay "The Ignorance of the Learned." The merely "learned man" he says, "stuffs his head with authorities built on authorities, with quotations quoted from quotations, while he locks up his senses, his understanding, and his heart. . . . . He sees no beauty in the face of nature or of art. . . . . His ears are nailed to his books; and deadened with the sound of the Greek

[1] *Old Familiar Faces*, by Theodore Watts-Dunton, pp. 109, 110 (Herbert Jenkins, Ltd.).

and Latin tongues, and the din and smithery of school-learning. . . . . The learned professor of all arts and sciences cannot reduce any one of them to practice, though he may contribute an account of them to an Encyclopædia."[1]

There is a fundamental distinction between a learned man and a cultured man. The learned man is he who is familiar with the facts of truth, the raw materials of knowledge. The cultured man is he in whom there is a love of truth and the refinement of nature which the love of and the possession of the truth impart; he is the man, indeed, who has woven into lovely things the raw materials of knowledge. Dean Church is nearer the mark when he speaks of "the progressive refinement of our human nature."[2] Man is more than mind and reason, more than fancy and imagination, more than the musical and poetic. Man is a soul, with an imperative moral sense and a heart which only love and loving can fill. Culture, in our meaning, is the refinement of the whole character and life. It is a great and noble word and it connotes a grand and sacred possibility.

It was in this large and liberal sense that Emerson thought of Culture. To begin with, Culture was an antidote to egotism, by bringing a man into contact with the world, with men of worth, "with philosophy, art and religion, travel, society and solitude." Culture, he says, gives a man "a mother wit" which uses everything for his life, but is

[1] *Table Talk*, pp. 96, 97.

[2] *The Gifts of Civilization*, by R. W. Church, p. 18 (Macmillan & Co., Ltd.).

never subdued by any of them. Culture awakes the sense of affinity with the best thinkers and their best thoughts. It "corrects the theory of success" and "opens the sense of beauty."

Goethe thought that piety was a means to culture. It was not an end in itself but a means to that end. It helped to culture "through purest inward peace."

Helen Keller, the blind scholar, knew the very secret of culture. "I love the beautiful truth," she says. We do not believe that this finest and highest culture is possible apart from Christianity. It was reserved to Jesus to bring life to its highest attainment, to inspire men to the noblest and purest in thought and action.

We would pay tribute to the culture which preceded the Incarnation and the Revelation of Christ. We believe that pre-Christian culture was of God. Just as we believe that the history of Israel was a preparation for the appearance and the ministry of our Lord, so we believe that the culture and civilization of Greece and Rome were, in the providence of God, schools of training for the world of men. Men have always been gifted and their gifts were the endowments of God. This was excellently put by Dean Church in his remarkable book *The Gifts of Civilization*. "There has always been a tendency in society in its higher forms, to produce, apparently by its own forces, some degree, at least, of that moral improvement and rise which the religious principle has produced. . . . . Civili-

zation cannot be said to be the same thing as the influence of Christianity, or to be purely a result derived from it; for these tendencies to moral improvement existed before Christianity, and showed themselves by unequivocal signs, however much they were thwarted, neutralized, or at last destroyed."[1]

We have but to think of the culture of ancient Greece to see how true this is. "No race in the world's history has influenced the secular thought of succeeding generations to such an extent as the Greeks." The poets and dramatists, the philosophers and orators, the painters and sculptors of Greece produced immortal works and achieved abiding fame. Classical scholarship revels in the Homeric poems, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The Greeks produced every type of genius in the centuries before Christ—dramatists like Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes; poets like Sappho, Menander, the author of *The New Comedy*; historians like Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon; philosophers like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus and Zeno. Demosthenes was the orator *par excellence*. In Art the Greeks were supreme. Phidias was the marvellous sculptor, the Parthenon, the temple of Athens, being his greatest work. Apelles was the illustrious painter. He was the only painter whom Alexander the Great permitted to paint his portrait.

Students of G. H. Lewes' *A Biographical History of Philosophy* do not need to be told of the

[1] *The Gifts of Civilization*, by R. W. Church, p. 116.

brilliance and power of Greek speculation. He tells of the philosophers, the mathematicians, the eleatics, the sophists, the cynics, the sceptics, the epicureans and the stoics. From Thales, whom he calls "the Father of Greek speculation," he traces the course of its history, and the student can never cease to marvel at the wonderful guesses and the extraordinary insight of these successive thinkers.

When the Greek Empire fell, Grecian learning found a home in Alexandria, and there it came into contact with Christianity. Mr. Lewes says: "In Alexandria . . . there were several schools and some new elements introduced into the doctrines then existent. Great thinkers . . . made it illustrious; and it had a rival, whose antagonism alone would confer immortal renown upon it; that rival was Christianity. In no species of grandeur was the Alexandrian school deficient. . . . . Plotinus, its real founder, resuscitated Plato; Proclus gave the world another Aristotle; and, in the person of Julian the Apostate, it became master of the world. For three centuries it was a formidable rival to the greatest power that ever appeared on earth—the power of Christianity; and, if it succumbed in the struggle, it only fell with the civilization of which it had been the last rampart."[1]

Mr. Lewes graphically describes the struggle between Alexandrian culture and Christianity. "While Christianity was making rapid and enduring progress in spite of every obstacle; while the Apostles wandered from city to city, some-

[1] *A Biographical History of Philosophy*, by G. H. Lewes, pp. 288, 289 (George Routledge & Sons, Ltd.).

times honoured as demi-gods, at other times insulted and stoned as enemies, the Neo-Platonists were developing the germ deposited by Philo, and not only constructing a theology, but endeavouring on that theology to found a Church. . . . . Christianity triumphed without much difficulty. Looking at it with a purely moral view, its immense superiority is at once apparent. The Alexandrians exaggerated the vicious tendency . . . to despise Humanity. . . . . How different from Christianity, in which, so far from human nature being degraded and despised, it is elevated and sanctified by the Messiah who adopted it, and by the doctrine of immortality in which the *body* is to rise again and live the life to come!"[1]

We think also of the culture which marked the civilization of the Roman Empire. What a galaxy of immortal names appears! In prose, in diverse forms, there were Cicero, Cæsar, Livy, Pliny, Seneca, Tacitus, Quintillian, Seutonius, Marcus Aurelius and Lucian. In poetry, the names of Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Lucan and Juvenal arise.

In *Seekers after God* Dean Farrar appraises the literary and moral qualities of Seneca, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. Seneca's message was "Ease," Epictetus eulogized "Freedom," Marcus Aurelius glorified "Self-Government."[2]

Yet these civilizations declined, their varied cultures failing to save them. They collapsed because their cultures had no moral and spiritual

[1] *A Biographical History of Philosophy*, pp. 293, 294.
[2] *Seekers after God*, by F. W. Farrar, D.D., p. 331 (Macmillan & Co., Ltd.).

bases and no vision of the eternal. They had no true knowledge of God and accordingly no true conception of man. Dr. W. L. Watkinson well answers Matthew Arnold. "Mr. M. Arnold," he says, "with all his glorification of Greek culture, confesses: 'Apparently it was the Hellenic conception of human nature which was unsound, for the world could not live by it.' No; with all the keenness of its insight, and all the splendour of its expression, 'the world could not live by it.' No more can the modern world live by a sceptical, indulgent philosophy; and it means ruin if we try."[1]

The civilization of Rome collapsed because it had "no power and spring of renewing." It was destitute of real spiritual vitality, bankrupt in the only qualities which abide. Secular culture in itself can neither save the individual nor the state.

We are familiar with a culture which has denied and flouted Christianity. There have been writers and poets, painters and novelists who have denounced Christianity as an actual menace to culture. They have set themselves up as the high priests and priestesses of culture the while they scorned the ethics and spiritualities for which the Christian religion stands. There is nothing in the story of literature at once so tragic and pathetic as the shames and scandals which gather round the Godwin-Shelley set. We think of Goethe and Byron. They repudiated the laws of God and the

[1] *The Influence of Scepticism on Character*, by W. L. Watkinson, p. 19 (The Epworth Press).

teachings of Christ. Their lives were full of intrigues and immoralities, even while they were following the Muse and writing bewitching verses.

These apostles of culture affirmed that their gospel was a nobler one than that which Jesus brought; that, even supposing Christianity has helped the world, it was no longer needed, now that their cult had been expounded. The case is well stated by Dr. Watkinson. In one of her letters George Eliot wrote: "I suppose no wisdom the world will ever find out will make Paul's words obsolete: 'Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity.'" But Ernest Renan challenged and controverted Paul. He said that the three great things were goodness, beauty and truth, and that the greatest of these was truth. "Virtue and art," he said, "did not exclude strong illusions, but truth is that which actually is and science still remains the most serious thing in the world." Renan glorified Science. Goethe, on the other hand, glorified Beauty. "Culture is a threefold devotion to beauty, goodness and science, the greatest of these being beauty." Matthew Arnold disputed both these appraisements and gave the crowning place to Literature, "the knowledge of the best that has been spoken and written in history, philosophy and poetry."[1]

[1] *The Influence of Scepticism on Character*, by W. L. Watkinson, pp. 31, 32.

Dean Church, in a memorable sermon, protested against this idolatry of science, literature and art.

In his famous lecture on "Religion and Modern Culture," delivered by Auguste Sabatier to the Religious Science Congress at Stockholm on September 2nd, 1897, he speaks of the "Mutual Penetration of Religion and Culture." Piety, to him, is "*the sensitiveness of the heart to God.*" Culture is the best the mind and spirit of man can dream and portray. Culture is a necessity of life, but it finds its freest exercise and its truest glory in the consciousness of the Christian faith and the experience of the Christian life. He says: "It is not the mission of religion to create a particular kind of literature, to be called sacred in opposition to profane literature, an ecclesiastical art over against a merely human art; no, ... its mission is to kindle in the hearts of those who have devoted themselves to art, the worship of ideal beauty." He adds: "Human culture needs this divine inspiration."[1]

Christianity is infinitely grander than any merely human culture. The revelation of God and of life in Christ, the experience of forgiveness and communion with God in Christ, and the inspiration to thought and deed prompted by Christ are finer human values and qualities than any secular culture can give. Paul knew that. Writing to the Corinthians, he says: "Christ did not send me to

[1] *Religion and Modern Culture*, by Auguste Sabatier, p. 214 (Williams & Norgate).

baptize but to preach the Gospel. And to preach it with no fine rhetoric, lest the cross of Christ should lose its power! Those who are doomed to perish find the story of the cross 'sheer folly,' but it means the power of God for those whom He saves. It is written: 'I will destroy the wisdom of the sages. I will confound the insight of the wise.' Sage, scribe, critic of this world, where are they all? Has not God stultified the wisdom of this world? For when the world with all its wisdom failed to know God in His wisdom, God resolved to save believers by the 'sheer folly' of the Christian message. Jews demand miracles and Greeks want wisdom, but our message is Christ the crucified—a stumbling-block to the Jews, 'sheer folly' to the Gentiles, but for those who are called, whether Jews or Greeks, a Christ who is the power of God and the wisdom of God."[1]

How poor the best of un-Christian culture is to the wisdom that cometh from above! Dean Church puts the contrast strikingly. "There are worthier and wider thoughts of God, the soul, man's calling, and purpose, in the Psalms, than often under the highest light of modern culture; *it* could not produce them, and sometimes hardly understands them. To pass to them from many a famous book of modern speculation, is like passing into the presence of the mountains and the waters and the midnight stars, from the brilliant conversation of one of our great capitals."[2]

[1] 1 *Corinthians*, i. 17-24, Moffatt's translation.
[2] *The Gifts of Civilization*, by R. W. Church, pp. 132, 133.

We do not depreciate the value of the culture which is alien to Christ. We are open-eyed to everything in poetry and in art, in music and in nature, in science and in philosophy, but we know that these things in themselves are not the highest truth nor the truest beauty. Secular culture is morally helpless, spiritually impotent.

We believe, indeed, that Christianity has been and is the purest and the mightiest inspiration to every type of culture. If it were not for Christianity our vaunted culture would be an empty and worthless thing. If Christianity be the one perfect faith and, indeed, the absolutely final religion, it cannot but be that it will inspire men to the noblest and the most beautiful things on every side of life. When the "ravishing novelty" of the truth as it is in Jesus is apprehended by the mind, and the "awful, rejoicing transport" of forgiveness and peace and life fills the soul, every faculty is excited, every gift is quickened, every power is magnified. The wise proverb of the Hindoos finds an illustration here. "The criterion of water is the water-lily," and the proofs are everywhere of the lovely cultures Jesus has inspired. From the living water flowing from Him, the loveliest lilies have grown in art and beauty, in poetry and song.

Philip Gilbert Hamerton, in his preface to *The Intellectual Life*, shows the wealth of our privilege. "The humblest subscriber to a mechanics' institute has easier access to sound learning than had either

Solomon or Aristotle, yet both Solomon and Aristotle lived the intellectual life. Whoever reads English is richer in the aids to culture than Plato was, yet Plato *thought* intellectually. It is not erudition that makes the intellectual man, but a sort of virtue which delights in vigorous and beautiful conduct. Intellectual living is not so much an accomplishment as a state or condition of the mind in which it seeks earnestly for the highest and purest truth."[1]

Jesus declared: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." He is the Way to the Truth and the Way to the Life. He is the Truth of the Way and the Truth of the Life; He is the Life of the Way and the Life of the Truth. Everything is in Christ and everything is ours because Christ is ours. "So you must not boast about men," Paul says. "For all belongs to you; Paul, Apollos, Cephas, the world, life, death, the present and the future—all belongs to you; and you belong to Christ and Christ to God."[2]

[1] *The Intellectual Life*, by Philip Gilbert Hamerton, Preface x (Macmillan & Co., Ltd.).

[2] 1 *Corinthians* iii. 21-23, Moffatt's translation.

CHAPTER III.

Christianity, Culture and the Bible.

THE story of Christianity in England is the story of English education, scholarship and culture. All who study the intellectual and cultural progress of our race find themselves at the beginning of Christianity, and, through all the development of learning and the advance in culture, they are simply witnessing the continuous permeation of life by the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. The fact to some may seem remarkable. To others it may be distasteful. But there is no fact more established in the literary history of our nation than its indebtedness to the Religion of Christ.

The very first piece of literature in the English tongue is *Cædmon's Paraphrase*, which is one of the many treasures in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. It was a collection of religious poems by different authors.

Cædmon was the first truly English poet. The story of his inspiration may be repeated. Stopford Brooke says : " It ought to be loved by us for it tells of the beginning in England of the wonderful life of English Poetry."

It was the custom at the feasts in the monastery of Hild, at Whitby in Yorkshire, for the guests to sing after the meal. Cædmon, believing that he was destitute of the power of song, used to leave the table before the merriment began. One night, when it was his duty to attend to the cattle, he had gone to the stables. Falling asleep he sees One in a vision, who said:

"Cædmon, sing me some songs!"

Immediately he made answer:

"I cannot sing; for this cause I left the feast and came hither."

But the One was insistent.

"You shall sing!" the visionary One exclaimed.

"What shall I sing?" the startled Cædmon asked.

"Sing the beginning of created things!" was the reply.

At once songs came to him, "verses to the praise of God" and, by and by, remembering what he had sung in his sleep, he sang them again, and other songs were also suggested.

In the morning, to the town-reeve he communicated the glorious vision he had had and the gift he had received. When the Abbess heard of this she ordered Cædmon to sing his songs to the learned men so that they might judge of their worth. The verdict was emphatic. The claim was vindicated that the Lord Himself had inspired Cædmon's lays. Stopford Brooke truly says: "English Poetry began with religion in the poems of Cædmon, and the greater part of the written poetry that followed him was also religious."

It cannot be too strongly pressed that from its dawn English Poetry has been entwined with Christianity. Stopford Brooke says: "When we came to Britain we were great warriors and great sea pirates—'sea wolves,' as a Roman poet calls us; and all our poetry down to the present day is full of war, and frequently of the sea. No nation has ever written so much sea-poetry. But we were more than mere warriors. We were a home-loving people when we got settled either in Sleswick or in England, and all our literature from the first writings to the last is full of domestic love, the dearness of home, and the ties of kinsfolk. We were a religious people, even as heathen, still more so when we became Christian, and our poetry is as much of religion as of war. But with Christianity a new spirit entered into English poetry. The war spirit did not decay, but into the song steals a softer element. The fatalism is modified by the faith that the fate is the will of a good God. The sorrow is not less, but it is relieved by an onlook of joy."[1]

Just as English Poetry began with the Northumbrian Cædmon so English Prose began with the Northumbrian Bæda. He belonged to the monastery at Jarrow. Never neglecting the duties of his order, his "constant pleasure lay in learning or teaching or writing." He was the author of forty-five different works.

[1] *English Literature*, by Stopford A. Brooke, p. 10 (Macmillan & Co., Ltd.).

"All that the world then knew of theology, science, music, rhetoric, medicine, arithmetic, astronomy and physics was brought together by him; his *Ecclesiastical History* is our best authority for Early England; accuracy and delightfulness are at one in it. It reveals his charming character; and indeed his life was as gentle and himself as loved, as his work is great. His books were written in Latin, ... but he strove to make English prose a literary language, for his last work was a *Translation of the Gospel of St. John*, as almost his last words were in English verse."[1]

Cuthbert, his disciple, has told the story of his death. His *Translation of the Gospel of St. John* was incomplete, and Bæda had called his scholars to his side in order that the dictation might continue.

"There is still a chapter wanting," the scribe said, "but it is hard for thee to question thyself longer!"

"It is easily done! Take thy pen and write swiftly!" the dying man commanded.

All through the day they wrote.

Evening was falling and the scribe observed: "There is still one sentence unwritten, dear master!"

"Write it quickly!" said Bæda, and it was written down.

"It is finished now!" the amanuensis cried.

"Thou sayest true!" replied Bæda, "All is finished now!"

Singing the 'Glory to God' he passed away.

[1] *English Literature*, p. 19.

"It is to that scene that English Prose looks back as its sacred source," Stopford Brooke comments.

King Alfred was at once a true Christian, a patron of Christian writings and himself a Christian author. He fills an honourable place both in the story of British Christianity and British culture. John Richard Green, the historian, is emphatic in regard to that. The words are memorable and cannot be recalled too often.

"The memory of the life and doings of the noblest of English rulers has come down to us living and distinct through the mist of exaggeration and legend that gathered round it. Politically or intellectually, indeed, the sphere of Alfred's action is too small to justify a comparison of him with the few whom the world claims as its greatest men. What really lifts him to their level is the moral grandeur of his life. He lived solely for the good of his people. He is the first instance in the history of Christendom of the Christian king, of a ruler who put aside every personal aim or ambition to devote himself to the welfare of those whom he ruled. . . . . He secured peace, good government, education for his people. . . . .

"The strong moral bent of Alfred's mind was seen in some of the novelties of his legislation. The Ten Commandments and a portion of the Law of Moses were prefixed to his code, and thus became part of the law of the land. . . . . He found time amidst the cares of state for the daily duties of religion, for converse with strangers, for study and

translation, for learning poems by heart, for planning buildings and instructing craftsmen in goldwork, for teaching even falconers and dog-keepers their business. . . . . He carried in his bosom a little handbook, in which he jotted down things as they struck him ; now a bit of family genealogy, now a prayer, now a story, . . . Each hour of the king's day had its peculiar task. . . . . In his busiest days Alfred found time to learn the old songs of his race by heart and bade them be taught in the Palace school. As he translated the tales of the heathen mythology he lingered fondly over and expanded them, and in moments of gloom he found comfort in the music of the Psalms."

But the greatest thing King Alfred did was in opening the world of literature to the people. The knowledge that had been confined to the clergy he gave to the common people. This he did by translations. The standard works of the day were translated into English. He was also an editor.

J. R. Green says : " Alfred created English literature," and adds : " The writer of English history may be pardoned if he lingers too fondly over the figure of the king in whose court, at whose impulse, it may be in whose very words, English history begins."[1]

It is impossible to dwell in detail on the history of English learning. It was penetrated with religious feeling, indeed with Christian feeling. In the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries abbeys were being established, all of which became

[1] *A Short History of the English People*, by John Richard Green, pp.45-49 (Macmillan & Co., Ltd.).

centres of knowledge and charity. At the time of the Great Charter *Orm's Ormulum* appeared. It was a metrical version of the Gospel for each day with a sermon in verse added. "It marks the rise of English religious literature," Stopford Brooke affirms, and adds, "Its religion is simple and rustic."

Geoffrey Chaucer and Edmund Spenser are great names in the story of the English language. In Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* we see the pilgrims making the journey from London to Canterbury. They are "pure tales" as all the critics agree.

In Spenser's *Faërie Queen* he described in allegory twelve knights setting out from the court of Gloriana, the Faërie Queen. The dragons of temptations with whom the knights do combat in the caves were the sins of the times. All through, also, there is the sense of the conflict between the Protestant Elizabeth and Mary, Queen of Scots.

Speaking of Chaucer, Stopford Brooke remarks: "He is our greatest story-teller in verse. All the best tales are told easily, sincerely, with great grace, and yet with so much homeliness, that a child would understand them. Sometimes his humour is broad, sometimes sly, sometimes gay, but it is also exquisite and affectionate. His pathos does not go into the far depths of sorrow and pain, but it is always natural. He can bring tears into our eyes, and he can make us smile or be sad as he pleases. His eye for colour was superb and distinctive. He had a very fine ear for the music of verse, and the tale and the verse go

together like voice and music. Indeed, so softly-flowing and bright are they, that to read them is like listening in a meadow full of sunshine to a clear stream rippling over its bed of pebbles. The English in which they are written is almost the English of our time; and it is literary English. Chaucer made our tongue into a true means of poetry. He did more, he welded together the French and English elements in our language, and all our prose writers and poets derive their tongue from the language of the *Canterbury Tales*."[1]

It is interesting to know that such a modern as John Masefield was led into a larger place by Chaucer. He was twenty-two years of age at the time and quite casually discovered and read the poem. It became, he says, "the poem of my conversion, leading me into a new glad world of thought, in fellowship with Shakespeare, Milton, Shelley and Keats."

This is Stopford Brooke's tribute to the *Faërie Queen*:

"It is the poem of the noble powers of the human soul struggling towards union with God, and warring against all the forms of evil; and these powers become real personages, whose lives and battles Spenser tells in verse so musical and so gliding, so delicately wrought, so rich in imaginative ornament, and so inspired with the finer life of beauty, that he has been called the poets' Poet. But he is the poet of all men who love poetry."[2]

[1] *English Literature*, pp. 47, 48.
[2] Page 77.

Alexander Smith, in *Dreamthorp*, has a discriminating estimate of these two great English writers.

"The differences between Chaucer and Spenser are seen at a glance in their portraits. Chaucer's face is round, good-humoured, constitutionally pensive, and thoughtful. You see in it that he has often been amused, and that he may easily be amused again. Spenser's is of sharper and keener feature, disdainful, and breathing that severity which appertains to so many of the Elizabethan men. . . . . We can trace the descent of the Chaucerian face and genius in Shakespeare and Scott, of the Spenserian in Milton and Wordsworth. In our day, Mr. Browning takes after Chaucer, Mr. Tennyson takes after Spenser."[1]

The Bible is central at once in the story of British Christianity and in the story of British culture. It is impossible to state all that the lovers of learning and culture owe to the lovers and devotees of the Bible. The increasing knowledge and diffusion of the Bible has been the continuous development of the culture of the people. We see it at once when we think of John Wyclif. He was not only "our first Protestant," but also "the father of our later English prose." Green, the historian, says: "The rough, clear, homely English of his tracts, the speech of the ploughman and the trader of the day, though coloured with the picturesque phraseology of the Bible, is in its

[1] *Dreamthorp*, by Alexander Smith, p. 254 (George Routledge & Sons, Ltd.).

literary use as distinctly a creation of his own as the style in which he embodied it, the terse, vehement sentences, the stinging sarcasms, the hard antitheses which roused the dullest mind like a whip."[1]

Wycliff had sent out his disciples, "The Lollards," and they had wrought wonders. Knowledge increased wherever they went.

In his retirement at Lutterworth, Wyclif had revised his translation of the whole Bible. "Wyclif's Bible" marked an epoch in the religious development of the land and also in the story of its culture. Stopford Brooke declares that "Wycliff's Bible made English the popular language of religious thought and feeling."

Naturally after Wyclif we think of William Tyndale. His *Translation of the New Testament* "fixed our standard English once for all and brought it finally into every English home. Tyndale held fast to pure English." "Of the 6,000 words of the *Authorised Version*, still in a great part his translation, only 250 are not now in common use. 'Three out of four of his nouns, adverbs and verbs are Teutonic.'"

Stopford Brooke adds: "Many millions of people now speak the English of Tyndale's Bible, and there is no book which has had, through the Authorised Version, so great an influence on the style of English literature and the standard of English prose."[2]

[1] *A Short History of the English People*, p. 234.
[2] *English Literature*, p. 58.

The testimony of J. R. Green must be given as to the superlative place of the English translation of the Scriptures in the life of the English people.

"No greater moral change ever passed over a nation than passed over England during the years which parted the middle of the reign of Elizabeth from the meeting of the Long Parliament. England became the people of a book, and that book was the Bible."

It was not only religiously that the Bible was significant, but from the standpoint of literature and the educational evolution of the people.

"The popularity of the Bible was owing to other causes besides that of religion. The whole prose literature of England, save the forgotten tracts of Wyclif, had grown up since the translation of the Scriptures by Tyndale and Coverdale. No history, no romance, no poetry, save the little-known verse of Chaucer, existed for any practical purpose in the English tongue when the Bible was ordered to be set up in churches. Sunday after Sunday, day after day, the crowds that gathered round Bonner's Bibles in the nave of St. Paul's, or the family group that hung on the words of the Geneva Bible in the devotional exercises at home, were leavened with the new literature."[1]

Green is emphatic that "the English version of the Bible remains the noblest example of the English tongue." It became "the standard of our language."

[1] *A Short History of the English People*, p. 447.

Even more than this is true. The words and phrases of the Bible passed into the current speech of the people. It was incorporated in the language of the poorest. And, in addition, it affected the social life of the nation in the most beneficent way. The spirit of the nation was changed. A fine moral impulse was infused. The debt of England to the Bible is beyond conception.

In this brief survey we can but refer to a few outstanding names. John Milton is distinctive. We do not forget A. C. Benson's criticism. On re-reading *Paradise Lost* he says that he was filled with "anger and indignation." In a literary sense he admired it, and a few of the similes had pleased him, but "the passages where God the Father speaks, discusses the situation of affairs, and arranges matters with the Saviour, are some of the most profane and vicious passages in English literature." He declares that he "would no more allow an intelligent child to read it than he would allow him to read an obscene book."[1]

If we remember that Milton was a Puritan, and recall the theology of his day, we shall read the great poem with sympathy.

Walter Bagehot has an illuminating essay on Milton. He admires "the bare simplicity of his ideas and the rich abundance of his illustrations."[2]

J. R. Green sees in Milton "not only a high but the complete type of Puritanism." Certain it is that *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* are among the immortal things in our language.

[1] *The Thread of Gold*, by A. C. Benson, p. 182 (John Murray).
[2] *Estimations in Criticism*, p. 198 (Andrew Melrose, Ltd.).

All the critics associate John Bunyan with John Milton. Both Puritans they were, though their styles were very different. It is inconceivable that *The Pilgrim's Progress* will ever become decadent.

One reads with amusement that James Anthony Froude's father—Archdeacon Froude—would not have a copy of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in his house, such was his horror of the Nonconformists. Stopford Brooke's tribute is eloquently phrased.

"Written by a man of the people, it is a people's book; and its simple form grew out of passionate feeling, and not out of self-conscious art. The passionate feeling was religious, and in painting the pilgrim's progress towards heaven, and his battle with the world, and temptation, and sorrow, the book touched those deep and universal interests which belong to poor and rich. Its language, the language of the Bible, and its allegorical form, initiated a plentiful prose literature of a similar kind. But none have equalled it."[1]

The place of the Bible in the making of men of culture is one of the grandest and most convincing proofs of its glory and power. It bespeaks, also, the spell of the Christian faith it enshrines. It must never be forgotten that the Old Testament is a vital part of the Christian revelation. The New Testament cannot dispense with the Old Testament. Principal George Adam Smith calls the Old Testament "Christ's Bible." He says: "The Old Testament, one cannot too often remember, lies not *under* but *behind* the New." He calls it the

[1] *English Literature*, p. 113.

"Hinterland" of the New Testament, "that country of which our Redeemer was Himself a native."[1]

John Ruskin is a case in point. Of his place in modern culture there can be no doubt. This is G. K. Chesterton's opinion. "As an artist in prose he is one of the most miraculous products of the extremely poetical genius of England."[2]

He is enthusiastic as to Ruskin's literary skill.

"The length of a Ruskin sentence is like that length in the long arrow that was boasted of by the drawers of the long bow. He draws, not a cloth-yard shaft but a long lance to his ear; he shoots a spear. But the whole goes light as a bird and straight as a bullet."[3]

The marvel of John Ruskin is that he was influential in so many spheres. In Art, in Industry, in Economics, as well as in Literature his voice was authoritative. We have but to think of the creations of his genius to see this; *The Stones of Venice*, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, *Fors Clavigera*, and *Modern Painters* are but a few of his numerous works.

He has told us in *Præterita* how much he owed to the Bible, not only in his literary life but in the creation of his life's convictions.

"Walter Scott and Pope's *Homer* were reading of my own election, and my mother forced me, by

[1] *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, by George Adam Smith, p. 3 (Hodder & Stoughton).

[2] *The Victorian Age in Literature*, by G. K. Chesterton, p. 65 (Williams & Norgate).

[3] Page 65.

steady daily toil, to learn long chapters of the Bible by heart; so as to read it every syllable through, aloud, hard names and all, from Genesis to the Apocalypse, about once a year; and to that discipline—patient, accurate, and resolute—I owe, not only a knowledge of the book, which I find occasionally serviceable, but much of my general power of taking pains, and the best part of my taste in literature."[1]

He refers to this Bible study again and again in his Autobiography.

An intimate knowledge of the Bible is a liberal education in itself. Even read as literature and without a sensitive understanding of its spiritual meaning, it is an enlargement of mind and contact with the highest literature. There are no historical records comparable to those in both the Old and New Testaments. The poetry of the Bible has abiding lustre and unfailing charm. The biographies of the Scriptures are character-studies unmatched in any other sphere of writing. The moral teaching of the Bible is superior to anything to be heard in any of the philosophic schools. The Gospels are undoubtedly the most valuable and fascinating documents in the possession of the world. For a man to profess to be cultured and to be ignorant of these is the immediate refutation of his claim. The truth is that as culture has advanced the Bible has become more precious, and its unique beauties more apparent and admired.

[1] *Præterita*, by John Ruskin, pp. 2, 3 (George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.).

There is abundant evidence in the life of Robert Louis Stevenson of his indebtedness to the Bible and to the people whose lives were devoted to the Bible. Not only his father and mother, but "Cummie" was his religious teacher. He was only eighteen months old when Alison Cunningham came to him and watched over him with extraordinary devotion. It was to her he dedicated *The Child's Garden*. "To Alison Cunningham From her Boy," the dedication ran. He sent her a copy of each of his books as it appeared, and all through his life he corresponded with her. Here is the evidence as given by Graham Balfour.

"Besides the Bible and the Shorter Catechism, which he had also from his mother, Cummie filled him with a love of her own favourite authors, M'Cheyne and others, Presbyterians of the straitest doctrine. It was she, in all probability, who first introduced him to 'The Cameronian Dream.' That poem, he afterwards told Mr. Gosse, made the most indelible impression on his fancy, and was the earliest piece of literature which awakened in him the sentiment of romantic Scottish history."

This, too, must be added.

"His father and mother were both genuinely religious people; the former clung, with a desperate intensity, to the rigid tenets of his faith; the latter was a true 'child of the manse,' and visited and befriended churches and missions wherever she went. But if Louis spent, as he tells us, 'a Covenanting childhood,' it was to Cummie that this was due."[1]

[1] *The Life of Robert Louis Stevenson*, by Graham Balfour, pp. 30, 31 (Methuen & Co., Ltd.).

In his student days he had three books with which he lived, "closer than any friends," we are told, "intimate parts of himself." They were the New Testament, Walt Whitman, and Herbert Spencer.

From Paris, when the trouble of his life was heavy upon him, he wrote to his father: "There is a fine text in the Bible, I don't know where, to the effect that all things work together for good to those who love the Lord. . . . . Strange as it may seem to you, everything has been, in one way or the other, bringing me a little nearer to what I think you would like me to be. . . . 'Tis a strange world, indeed, but there is a manifest God for those who care to look for Him."[1]

A world of Romance gathers round *The Bible in Spain* and its famous author. In every sense it is a remarkable book. Sent as an agent for the British and Foreign Bible Society to Spain to circulate the Scriptures, he had the most exciting experiences. That his life was one of hazard can easily be believed, that his adventure was most successful his book abundantly proves. The point of view of the Spaniard towards the Word of God is obvious from the surprise of Mendizabal, the Prime Minister of Spain, and, at that time, a man of tremendous power.

Borrow, through the kindly intervention of Mr. Villiers, the British Ambassador at Madrid, had asked to be allowed to print the Scriptures in Spanish and to sell them throughout the land.

[1] Page 114.

"Yours is not the first application I have had," Mendizabal said. "Ever since I held the reins of government I have been pestered in this manner by English calling themselves Evangelical Christians, who have of late come flocking over into Spain. Only last week a hunchbacked fellow found his way into my cabinet whilst I was engaged in important business, and told me that Christ was coming. . . And now you have made your appearance, and almost persuaded me to embroil myself yet more with the priesthood, as if they did not abhor me enough already. . . . . What a strange infatuation is this which drives you over lands and waters with Bibles in your hands!"[1]

George Borrow succeeded in issuing an edition of the New Testament in Spanish. He actually opened a shop for the sale of them in Madrid. He, and his faithful servant, sold copies from door to door. The most unexpected sales he secured and from the most unlikely persons. Borrow was convinced that the way of the Bible was the way of freedom and progress and culture, that, indeed, there could be no real culture in Spain, or in any other land, until the Bible was known and loved and obeyed.

Watts-Dunton writes intimately and enthusiastically of Borrow as a writer and as a man. In his love of Nature he was a true poet. "No man's writing can take you into the country as Borrow's can; it makes you feel the sunshine, see the

[1] *The Bible in Spain*, by George Borrow, p. 118 (George Routledge & Sons, Ltd.).

meadows, smell the flowers, hear the skylark sing, and the grasshopper chirrup. Who else can do it? I know of none. And as to personal intercourse with him, if I were asked what was the chief delight of this, I should say that it was the delight of bracingness."[1]

Borrow's profound religiousness is here expressed.

"The very basis of Borrow's nature was reverence. His unswerving belief in the beneficence of God was most beautiful, most touching."

He knew that the pure in heart see God and everything that is divine.

"To enjoy nature the soul *must* be free—free not only from tax-gatherers, but from sin."

He was a remarkable man in every way.

"Even by his personal appearance Borrow was marked off from his fellow-men. As a gipsy girl once remarked, 'Nobody as ever see'd the white-headed Romany Rye ever forgot him.' Standing considerably above six feet in height, he was built as perfectly as a Greek statue, and his practice of athletic exercises gave his every movement the easy elasticity of an athlete under training. As to his countenance, 'noble' is the only word that can be used to describe it."[2]

Watts-Dunton explains: "(Borrow's hair was white I believe when he was quite a young man)."

Men of culture ceaselessly turn to the Bible. They need, even as men of letters, to keep the highest and purest ever before their minds, and it

[1] *Old Familiar Faces*, by Theodore Watts-Dunton, p. 30 (Herbert Jenkins, Ltd.).

[2] Page 53.

is in the Bible that they find this. But there is also a spirit in the Bible which is the fount of all fine feeling and refinement of soul. We have a radiant illustration of this in A. C. Benson's *The Thread of Gold*. First he had read the forty-eighth chapter of Genesis, where we see and hear Jacob blessing the sons of Joseph. Then he had read the last chapter of the Gospel of St. John, and then the eighth chapter of the Revelation. He is charmed with them all! As literature they are of the essence of culture. Of the *Death-Bed of Jacob* he says: "Compare this ancient story with other achievements of the human mind and soul; with Homer, with Virgil, with Shakespeare. I think they pale beside it, because with no sense of effort or construction, with all the homely air of a simple record, the perfectly natural, the perfectly pathetic, the perfectly beautiful, is here achieved. There is no painting of effects, no dwelling on accessories, no consciousness of beauty; and yet the heart is fed, the imagination touched, the spirit satisfied. For here one has set foot in the very shrine of truth and beauty, and the wise hand that wrote it has just opened the door of the heart, and stands back, claiming no reward, desiring no praise."[1]

The Bible is not only a literature in itself but it has created literatures. No book has so enthralled the eager attention of students as the Bible. Scholars of every school have spent their lives in studying and interpreting it. The linguists have given themselves to the study of the sacred

[1] *The Thread of Gold*, p. 146.

languages and of the languages akin to these. The earliest MSS. have been patiently examined, and to the production of the purest texts they have given a lifetime's loyalty. Archeologists have been keen to identify the places named in the Scriptures and to unearth all that remains of the ancient sites and monuments. Commentators have striven to teach the true meaning of the messages and oracles, and to aid the modern student to put himself in the place of those who first heard or read the narratives and prophecies. In the Universities and colleges teachers have pursued their sacred investigations, writing their books and teaching the men who were to be preachers of the Word.

And all this is culture. The very subjects are culture. The training itself and the devotion of the life to it are culture. For generations we have had these honoured students and teachers. The whole church has been enriched by their labours. We turn to them as our guides and our debt to them can never be spoken. And, we repeat, that all this is culture. The scholars who have given us Lives of Christ, Bible Portraits, Prophetical Studies, Introductions, and Commentaries on the Books and their teachings, have all been furthering the cause of Christ which is also the cause of culture. It is impossible to refer to them by name, but tribute should be paid to their priceless services.

The Bible has done even more than this. It has made men and women who were literature, poems and gospels. What a wealth of culture we have

in the great biographies, the record of the lives of the good and great who lived nobly and served sacrificially! They are culture. Some of them were preachers or missionaries or evangelists. Some were bookmen, journalists, or men of letters. Some served in the business of the State or in Commerce, in Law, or in Medicine. Scores of them were what they were, and did what they did, because of the Bible and the Redeemer whom the Scriptures revealed. They were cultured in every sense, in thought and feeling, in speech and action. It was created by the faith and love of Him who came to reveal the Father, to redeem the soul, and to beautify the life.

Emerson is right, and in this we rejoice. "This is the key to the power of the greatest men—their spirit diffuses itself."

These men of culture, these Bible students and lovers, these men who were the "World's Bibles," have contributed to the culture which Christianity inspires.

CHAPTER IV.

Christianity and Science.

IN the minds of many science is but another name for culture. Our age is the scientific age. We may well be proud of the discoveries in every branch of scientific investigation. Astronomy, geology, botany, biology, physics, electricity, heat, light, and sound—in all these spheres the minds of men have explored, and great and wonderful results have accrued.

There was a time when Christian men and Christian teachers were suspicious and opposed to science. They believed that the purposes of the scientists were anti-religious, and that the findings of the scientists were antagonistic to the traditional religious beliefs. It is pathetic to think of the abuse to which these students of the works of God were exposed. The authoritative findings of the geologists were supposed to conflict with the Biblical record of the creation of the world. When the theory of evolution was advanced, Christian preachers denounced it as the heresy of heresies. Fortunately for religion, and for Christianity in particular, the scientists were undeterred. They pursued their studies and became increasingly eager

in investigation. They corrected each other, and in the end attained the most remarkable unanimity in their verdicts and results.

We now see how foolish was this suspicion of science and its devotees. How could science be anti-religious and anti-Christian? If, as we believe, nature is the handiwork of God, how could its facts and truths contradict that other revelation of God which we have in the Bible and in the Incarnate Word—in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ?

We know what science is. The scientists themselves are the frankest in their confession of its limitations, even while they are emphatic in the declaration of its truth. Science, one says, is "the systematized knowledge of Sense-phenomena." Science, says another, is "simply another name for organized knowledge and the pursuit of it. It is the knowledge of verifiable facts and of the relations between them; the results of experiment, research, generalization, proceeding from the known to the unknown, predicting, verifying, and gradually adding to our stores of the known from the vast stores of the unknown."[1]

Science has positive things to say about the works of God. The late Professor W. B. Bottomley gives this brilliant resume. "Science recognizes that there were probably millions of years in the evolution of the earth, when only physical phenomena were evident. But during that period there was continuous progression—ether to electron, electron to atom, atom to molecule, molecule to

[1] *Science and Religion*, p. 116 (Holborn Publishing House).

colloid. Then, after the influx of biotic energy, there were long years during which were evolving the various forms of organisms, simple to complex, and these to more complex still. Then in the psychical we have Man, endowed with mind, which some consider another special energy—form—manifestation."[1]

There are three stages or phases, he explains. "(1) the physical order, the world of matter; (2) the vital order, the world of organisms, and (3) the psychical order, where mind is supreme. Evolution, as taught by modern Science, shows that each is an ascent on the previous one. The vital makes use of the physical and transcends it. The psychical utilizes both physical and vital and transcends both."[2]

Professor J. A. Fleming tells of the wonders the science of astronomy has revealed. "You doubtless know," he says, "that our sun is a vast globe about eight hundred thousand miles in diameter, or nearly one hundred times that of the Earth, and that round it move, in nearly circular paths, a large family of planets or globes, like the Earth in some respects, but some larger and some smaller. There are eight principal planets, viz., Mercury, Venus, the Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune, and between Mars and Jupiter a very large number of extremely small planets. These all travel round the sun in the same direction. We know that the Earth travels round

[1] *Science and Religion*, p. 66.
[2] *Science and Religion*, p. 64.

the sun in nearly $365\frac{1}{4}$ days, and that its distance from the sun is nearly ninety-three million miles. Astronomers have been able to measure the distances of all these planets from the sun and their times of revolution."[1]

The scientists affirm that in the world of nature they have discovered certain definite principles. There are five on which they are all agreed—order, stability, directivity, intelligibility, and beauty.

Science deals with facts. It is its one business to ascertain the facts. Professor Silvanus Thompson puts this tersely. "*Discoveries*," he says, "have no relation to *creeds*. Facts are facts. Oxygen is necessary for breathing. Milk is needful for infants. Magnets point northwards. Green colouring matter of leaves, or chlorophyll, as it is called, is essential to plant growth. But these have nothing to do with any particular religion, any more than the multiplication table has. There is no such thing as Jewish oxygen, or Trinitarian milk, or Methodist magnets, or Catholic chlorophyll. Neither religion nor metaphysics has any place in scientific research. Facts are facts, whatever the religion of the man who discovers them or uses them. *Truth is greater than any statement of it by its exponents*. . . . . God has given us brains whereby to investigate knowledge; and those things which are the legitimate subjects of scientific enquiry, He does not reveal to us, except in the way thus appointed."[2]

[1] *Science and Religion*, pp. 36, 37.
[2] *Science and Religion*, pp. 117, 118.

Science has its own aphorisms. "Nothing comes from nothing." "Life proceeds from life." "Like proceeds from like." "Breeds can be improved."

True religion and true science cannot be opposed. Both are of God and from God. There cannot be contradiction in truth. "The laws of nature are the thoughts of God." Dr. Fleming truly says: "Science and Religion are not opposed. They are not enemies. They are not neutrals. They are allies. Rather are they two great departments of one vast domain. The one is the outer court in which the reverent and thoughtful student can trace out the Laws of Nature and yet find in them an Intelligence which is above it. The other is an inner Shrine in which the soul of man, exercising faculties higher than mere intelligence, can, as it were, stretch forth a hand into the darkness and yet find a response giving an assurance of an Over-ruling Power, which can grant strength and help in time of need."[1]

The fact is that now we see that Christ's teaching is on the lines of Science and Philosophy. Dr. David Smith suggests that the principles of the new discoveries have been lying there unobserved in the Christian revelation. He quotes Dr. S. D. McConnell, the author of *Evolution of Immortality*. This is the wonderful news. "I venture to think that Darwin and the martyrs of natural science have done more to make the word of Christ intelligible than have Augustine and the theologians. It is little less than marvellous, the way in which

[1] *Science and Religion*, p. 56.

the words of Jesus fit in with the forms of thought which are to-day current. They are life, generation, survival of the fit, perishing of the unfit, tree and fruit, multiplication by cell growth as yeast, operation by chemical contact as salt, dying of the lonely seed to produce much fruit, imposition of a higher form of life upon a lower by being born from above, grafting a new scion upon a wild stock, the phenomena of plant growth from the seed through the blade, the ear, and the matured grain, and, finally, the attainment of an individual life which has an eternal quality."[1]

Religion, and especially the Christian religion, owes much to science. Professor Henry Drummond was most emphatic in regard to that. His famous *The Natural Law in the Spiritual World* was designed to show the interrelation between Nature and Religion and the interdependence of science and faith. His *Ascent of Man* was a spiritual treatment of the truth of evolution. He was insistent on the gains science had brought to the spiritual faith he held so dearly. His striking articles in the *Expositor* on "The Contribution of Science to Christianity" will be recalled. Drummond affirmed that the theologians were entitled to use the scientific method, and that the two things on which the scientific method was based are the value of facts and the value of laws. He says: "On bare facts science from first to last is based. Now, if Christianity possesses anything, it

[1] *The Historic Jesus*, by David Smith, D.D., p. 84 (Hodder & Stoughton).

possesses facts. So long as the facts were presented to the world Christianity spread with marvellous rapidity. But there came a time when the facts were less exhibited to men than the evidence for the facts. Theology, that is to say, began to rest on authority. . . . . Then there came another time when this authority appealed to the secular arm. . . . . Now Christianity is learning from science to go back to its facts, and it is going back to facts. Critics in every tongue are engaged upon the facts; travellers in every land are unveiling facts; exegetes are at work upon the words; scholars upon the manuscripts; sceptics, believing and unbelieving, are eliminating the not-facts; and the whole field is alive with workers. And the point to mark is that these men are not manipulating, but verifying, facts. There is one portion of this field of facts, however, which is still strangely neglected, and to which a scientific theology may turn its next attention. The evidence for Christianity is not the Evidences. The evidence for Christianity is *a Christian*. The unit of physics is the atom, of biology the cell, of philosophy the man, of theology the Christian. The natural man, his regeneration by the Holy Spirit, the spiritual man and his relations to the world and to God, these are the modern facts for a scientific theology. . . . . But not less essential, in the scientific method, than the examination of facts is the arrangement of them under laws. And the work of modern science in this direction has resulted in its grandest achievement—the demonstration of

the uniformity of nature. This doctrine must have an immediate effect upon the entire system of theology."[1]

In illuminating words the Evangelist-Scientist showed how the theory of Evolution has given us a grander Bible.

"The supreme contribution of Evolution to Religion is that it has given it a clearer Bible. Science is the great explainer, the great expositor, not only of nature, but of everything it touches. Its function is to arrange things and make them reasonable. And it has arranged the Bible in a new way, and made it as different as science has made the world. It is not going too far to say that there are many things in the Bible which are hard to reconcile with our ideas of a just and good God. This is only expressing what even the most devout and simple minds constantly feel, and feel to be sorely perplexing, in reading especially the Old Testament. But these difficulties arise simply from an old-fashioned or unscientific view of what the Bible is, and are similar to the difficulties found in nature when interpreted either without the aid of science, or with the science of many centuries ago. We see now that the mind of man has been slowly developing, that the race has been gradually educated, and that revelation has been adapted from the first to the various and successive stages through which that development passed. . . . Evolution has given Christianity a new Bible. Its peculiarity is that in its form it is like the

[1] *The Expositor* for 1885, Third Series, vol. i.

world in which it is found. . . . . This Bible is not a book which has been made; it has grown. Hence it is no longer a mere word-book, nor a compendium of doctrines, but a nursery of growing truths. . . . . It is a record of inspired deeds as well as of inspired words, an ascending series of inspired facts in a matrix of human history."[1]

Professor A. L. Humphries was alert to the truth of all this in his Hartley Lecture on *The Holy Spirit in Faith and Experience.* Truth is one, and the Spirit of Truth is ever guiding the minds of men into the manifold truth. Everything is converging to clearer and grander conceptions of the perfect truth. "Have not the criticism and discoveries of the last half-century, in the flood of illumination which they have cast upon the Scriptures, illustrated in a wonderful fashion the truth of Pastor Robinson's dictum: 'God has more light yet to break out of His word'? Is evolution, which has so profoundly modified scientific theory concerning man and the universe, to have no reaction upon the theologian's view of Him, who, being the God of both nature and grace, may at least be presumed to work in both realms by similar laws?"[2]

Many of the greatest scientists were devout and earnest Christians. Many living scientists have their real life hidden in God in Christ. It is quite true that some who have been illustrious in scientific

[1] *The Life of Henry Drummond,* by George Adam Smith, pp. 234-236 (Hodder & Stoughton).

[2] *The Holy Spirit in Faith and Experience,* by A. Lewis Humphries, M.A., p. 338 (Holborn Publishing House).

research have been obliged to confess themselves agnostics—Huxley, for example, though we are glad to quote Lord Kelvin's testimony to him: "If religion means strenuousness in doing right, and trying to do right, who has earned the title of a religious man better than Huxley?"[1]

Charles Darwin knew the reality of Christian things. His testimony is quoted in the Life of *James Chalmers*, and no wonder! It is in itself a fine tribute to missionary work. This was an entry of Darwin's in his *Voyage of the Beagle*.

"Before we laid ourselves down to sleep the elder Tahitian fell on his knees, and with closed eyes repeated a long prayer in his native tongue. He prayed as a Christian should do, with fitting reverence and without the fear of ridicule or any ostentation of piety. At our meals, neither of the men would taste food without saying beforehand a short grace. Those travellers who think that a Tahitian prays only when the eyes of the missionary are fixed upon him, should have slept with us that night on the mountain side."[2]

Some of the foremost scientists were born in Christian homes and reared in the truest piety. Professor J. A. Fleming and Dr. John Allen Harker were the sons of Congregational ministers. Professor Edward Hull, "the Nestor of Geological Science," was the son of an Episcopal clergyman. Dr. Dallinger was a Wesleyan Methodist minister. Professor Silvanus Thompson is a member of the

[1] *Science and Religion*, p. 122.

[2] *James Chalmers*, by Richard Lovett, p. 104 (Religious Tract Society).

Society of Friends, and Professor Bottomley was a devoted Wesleyan Methodist. These and others were inspired to the love of science and to scientific pursuits because of their faith in God and in His Son, and their knowledge and experience of Christianity were enhanced by all the wonders they found and by the sacred studies they pursued.

It was once assumed that all scientists were non-religious and anti-Christian. Nothing could be further from the truth. Christianity has been the inspirer of science, and it is glorious to think of all that many eminent scientists owed to Christ. The proof of this is so voluminous that only the briefest reference is possible. In no field of human thought has Christ had finer allies and servants. Sir Isaac Newton, Sir Humphry Davy, Michael Faraday, Peter Guthrie Tait were truly religious men.

Linnæus, the famous botanist, was the son of a clergyman in South Sweden. He had such a sense of the divine omniscience that he wrote over the door of his library these words: "Live innocently, God is present." He truly believed, as he confessed in his Autobiography, that God had "permitted him to visit His secret council-chambers." John Kepler, the astronomer, declared that in all his astronomical observations, he was "but thinking the thoughts of God over again." It is said of Sir John Herschel that "he walked in the light as God is in the light and had fellowship with Him, and by this fellowship his genius was exalted and his life purified." John Couch Adams, F.R.S., whose name is linked with the discovery

of the planet Neptune, was "a humble and sincere Christian."

Lord Kelvin, famous as Sir William Thomson before he became a peer, was once walking through the fields with Liebig, the great chemist. "Do you think that grass and flowers grow by mere chemical forces?" he asked Liebig. "No!" said Liebig, "no more than I believe a book on Botany describing them could grow by mere chemical forces. They both need a designing and directing power." In his presidential address to the British Association in Edinburgh Lord Kelvin said: "I feel profoundly convinced that the argument from design has been greatly too much lost sight of in recent zoological speculations. But overpoweringly strong proofs of intelligent and benevolent design lie all around us, and if ever perplexities, whether metaphysic or scientific, turn us away from them for a time. they come back upon us with irresistible force, showing us through Nature the influence of a free-will, and teaching us that all living beings depend on one ever-acting Creator and Ruler."[1]

Sir David Brewster's name is an honoured name in Science. He was also Principal of Edinburgh University. His daughter has told of his humble and penitent and trustful Christian life. "Frequently," she writes, "in the earliest morning, when the writing, and the microscope and the Bible-reading were over, have I been awakened to listen in awe to the sounds of prayer and weeping below." A friend recalls a tender reminiscence. "One

[1] *Great Thoughts*, xvii, p. 59.

cherished remembrance is of a sweet communion Sabbath in a country church in Aberdeenshire. After the simple service, some delay having occurred with the carriage, we two rested in a little wayside cottage, and there out of the abundance of the childlike heart the mouth of the philosopher spoke. One very dear to him having been deterred from joining the service by doubts of personal acceptance, he mourned over this, saying with much simplicity, 'I see it all so clearly myself. It can't be presumption to be SURE, because it is Christ's work, not ours; on the contrary, it is presumption to doubt His word and His work."[1]

Sir James Young Simpson was a famous physician; he was also a humble Christian. There is no name more treasured than his. Moved to compassion in the hospitals by the cries of poor women under operations, he never ceased his investigations until he had found something to assuage their pains. He "popularized the anæsthetic virtues of chloroform." Can any human mind even imagine the blessing of this? Is it ever likely that his name will be forgotten? He was one of the benefactors of his race. It was said of him that he had "the brain of an Apollo, the eye of an eagle, the heart of a lion, and the hand of a lady." He was a humble and believing follower of Christ. A biographer says that even more conspicuous than his skill as a physician was the strength and simplicity of his Christian faith. Asked once what was the greatest discovery he had

[1] *Roads to Christ*, pp. 114-117 (Religious Tract Society).

ever made, this was his reverent reply: "The greatest discovery I ever made was that I was a sinner and that Jesus is a Saviour."

James Clerk Maxwell exulted in the inter-relation of Christianity and Science. "I think men of Science," he says, "as well as other men, need to learn from Christ, and I think Christians, whose minds are scientific, are bound to study Science, that their views of the glory of God may be as extensive as their being is capable of."[1]

Hugh Price Hughes, all through his life, was strongly drawn to the study of Natural Science. He had once contemplated studying for the Science Degree. Years afterwards he said: "I often wish that I had made more use of my time at Oxford. What a fool I was! And there was a splendid laboratory at my disposal. But I had not time, you know. I never have for anything." His daughter says that he once announced with great solemnity that he was going to purchase a microscope so that he and his wife could make some scientific observations. Throughout his life he devoured articles on various aspects of natural science.[2]

Professor Bottomley saw in Christianity the final thing in the evolution of life. "Let me just repeat," he says, "the glorious unity of evolution: the lesser manifestation of the Infinite giving us matter; a higher stage of the Infinite revealed in the energy of life, giving us organisms; a higher

[1] *Science and Religion*, p. 94.

[2] *The Life of Hugh Price Hughes*, by His Daughter, p. 136 (Hodder & Stoughton).

stage still, the mental; and higher revelation still, God, an Infinite Power behind all, the God, if you like, of the mythology, the old religions; and then the final consummation, God Himself revealed in Christ as love, unselfishness, giving Himself for the world."[1]

Professor Silvanus Thompson is an eminent scientist and an equally powerful Christian apologist. "Since the days of Micah the Morasthite there has happened the greatest event in the world's history—the life and death of Jesus Christ. Does that make no difference in our obligations? . . . . . Have we not now a new obligation—to follow in the footsteps of the Christ, not merely to offer Him the lip-service of calling ourselves His followers, but to fulfil His commands, to obey His golden rule, to practise the self-renunciation of which He gave us so Divine an example?"[2]

Dr. John Edward Stead, one of the brilliant family of the Steads, a son of the Independent Minister of Howdon-on-Tyne, a Doctor of Science and a Doctor of Metallurgy, made a splendid suggestion to the Science Week of 1914 in Browning Hall. He said: "What I should like to see is the formation of a British Association for the Advancement of Religion, and that this Association should meet annually, just as does the similar British Association for the Advancement of Science. . . . . Such a society, consisting of members from all the religious bodies, dominated by mutual respect and love, would obtain the knowledge necessary to

[1] *Science and Religion*, p. 74. [2] *Science and Religion*, p. 133.

enable them to put religion on a true, catholic and scientific basis. It would involve the elimination of some of the old and untenable dogmas, but from actual knowledge, I can state with conviction, it is these, which are stumbling blocks in the way of the advance of true religion. Therefore this elimination would be a great advantage to the world."[1]

We have referred to Professor Drummond. His biographer, Dr. George Adam Smith, says of Drummond's *Ascent of Man :* " The Book vindicated Nature, as also the sphere of the God of Love, and sought to prove the presence of the characteristic forces of Christianity—sympathy and self-sacrifice—upon the lower stages of the evolution of man. It might almost be said that Drummond expressed, in the language and with the information of his own time, the vision which the ancient seer saw of *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*"[2]

In his review in the *Expositor* of *The Ascent of Man,* Mr. Benjamin Kidd said that Drummond's book was " Not so much science as the poetry of science."

Professor M'Kendrick sees the analogy which Drummond saw between Christianity and Evolution. " What is Evolution? A method of creation. What is its object? To make more perfect living beings. What is Christianity? A method of creation. What is its object? To make more perfect living beings. Through what does Evolution work? Through Love. Through what does

[1] *Science and Religion,* pp. 137, 138.
[2] *The Life of Henry Drummond,* by George Adam Smith, p. 431.

Christianity work? Through Love. Evolution and Christianity have the same Author, the same end, the same spirit."[1]

"A star mist and a planet, a crystal and a cell,
A jelly-fish and a saurian, then caves where cave men dwell;
Then a sense of law and beauty, and a face turned from the sod;
Some call it Evolution; and others call it God."

These men, distinguished scientists all of them, the very flower of the culture of their times, were convinced and humble Christians. Many others could be named. There is one other who must be named, "a philosopher as well as a physicist, a theologian whilst also a mathematician," Sir Oliver Lodge. He delivered the opening address at the Science Week of 1914 on "Help from the Unseen." His faith in the Saviour of mankind is shown by this single and simple fact. At the close of his address he suggested that Cardinal Newman's great hymn should be sung.

"Praise to the Holiest in the height,
And in the depth be praise;
In all His words most wonderful,
Most sure in all His ways.

"O wisest love! that flesh and blood,
Which did in Adam fail,
Should strive afresh against the foe—
Should strive and should prevail!

"And that a higher gift than grace
Should flesh and blood refine,
God's Presence and His very Self,
And Essence all-divine.

"O generous love! that He, who smote
In man for man the foe,
The double agony in man
For man should undergo.

"And in the garden secretly,
And on the Cross on high,
Should teach His brethren, and inspire
To suffer and to die!"

[1] *The Life of Henry Drummond*, p. 436.

In the light of such testimony it cannot be thought that Christianity is alien to culture. In the field of science, at any rate, many of its most brilliant exponents and discoverers were followers of Him who came to seek and to save the lost, to proclaim the Kingdom of Heaven, and to lead men to newness of life in Him.

CHAPTER V.

Christianity and Art.

ART is one of the noblest forms of human culture. The artistic gift is one of the rarest of endowments. While many have the power of artistic appreciation only a minority have the artistic touch and skill. The culture of a nation is infallibly revealed in the quality of its art and in the nature of its artistic life.

The Editor of *The Hibbert Journal*, Principal L. P. Jacks, has a great passage on "The Significance of Art." He says: "Art is the name for the most complete and most intense form of expression for the inner life of man. Its exercise compels a combination of the highest human faculties of conscience, intellect, imagination, feeling, and skill, and becomes successful in proportion as these faculties, are, on the one hand, strong and versatile, and, on the other, charged with the personal life and force of their possessor. When these are present in the highest degree the result of the artist's efforts is the creation of great, lovely and immortal works. The successful pursuit of the Fine Arts demands, as its first condition, the concentration of faculties upon the matter in hand

and the yielding up of the entire man to the artistic; and the more complete the self-surrender of the Artist, the nobler will be the result. In all great artistic work, therefore, we have a more perfect self-revelation of the worker's soul than in any other type of human expression. And it follows from this, that if Religion form one of the elements of the artist's character, or that of the age which he reflects, it will assuredly betray itself in his creations. There is no spiritual quality which pervades character so completely as the emotion connected with the religious life, whatever be the special form this latter may take. Wherever it is present, it will certainly make its presence felt by signs intelligible to a sympathetic eye. And if absent, its absence will be equally apparent."[1]

There have been many schools of painters, each with its own standard of excellence and its own definite characteristics. There was the school of Florence, made famous by the works of Michael Angelo and Leonardo da Vinci; the school of Rome in whom Raphael was supreme; Titian was the shining light of the Venetian school and Correggio of the Lombard school; the Flemish school boasted many men of genius but Rubens was the master of them all. The Dutch school is memorable, and particularly because of the achievements of Rembrandt. The French and English schools have also played a great part in the evolution of European and world-wide art.

[1] *Religion and Life*, by L. P. Jacks. *Great Thoughts*, XVII. 170.

In all these schools there was an inner school devoted to Jesus Christ. Many of the world's most famous painters devoted their lives to religious studies and particularly to the portraiture of the Divine Man, God's Son, the Redeemer of mankind. It is perfectly obvious that the world's greatest artists have been fascinated by Jesus. They were keen students of the Gospels and of the Old Testament Scriptures which preceded and prepared for the revelation of the New Testament. The personality of our Lord enthralled them. They lived with His glorious figure in their minds and they spent their years in revealing and displaying Him. Christianity as a revelation was a reality to them and they used their art as a means of evangelism. On the canvas they told what their eyes saw and their hearts felt of the truth as it is in Jesus. Each artist was an evangelist and preacher. There is every possible difference in their conceptions, but they are at one in their ardent and noble desire to set forth His fame and praise. Many of these artists had a living and personal love for the Saviour and their art was the means by which they proved their loyalty and devotion. And Christianity throughout their lives was an unfailing inspiration. It is marvellous how these great preachers of the brush and pencil never wearied in following Christ and in paying Him homage. It is the simple truth that these artists came to the highest excellence in their culture because they were students in the school of Christ and concentrated their talents to His glory. It is

impossible to name them all but these names are honoured in the highest courts of Art, and they were all famous because of their absorption in Christ, in His ministry and work. Leonardo da Vinci, Albert Durer, Raphael, Correggio, Veronese, Rubens, Van Dyck, Rembrandt, Murillo, Gustave Dore and many others. In more modern times these great names are recalled : Munkacsy, Holman Hunt, Burne Jones, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, John Everett Millais, G. F. Watts, Sir Noel Paton, Madox Brown, and hosts of others have been Evangelists of Art.

The significance of this cannot be exaggerated. These glorious painters were Gospel preachers. They owed their excellence as artists to the inspiration of Christ and, in return, they preached Christ to the rich and to the poor, to their contemporaries and to the generations succeeding.

Dr. R. P. Downes pays this glowing tribute to Rembrandt. " If anyone wishes to know what the common people in Holland and Germany did actually believe in the sixteenth century concerning the Gospel of Jesus Christ, he must go, not to the Synods of Dort, or to the writings of Lutheran or Calvinistic divines, but to the works of Rembrandt. We learn from this great artist that the common people, whom he loved and represented, heard Jesus Christ gladly. They knew and felt sure that Jesus Christ was the Poor Man's Saviour and the Poor Man's Friend, and they treasured up His words and listened to the story of His works with reverence and affection. It was on the life of

Christ, in His relation to the common people, that the genius of Rembrandt spent itself in its finest intensity."[1]

We have but to think of some of Rembrandt's great canvases to see how true all this is. We think of his "Annunciation to the Shepherds," "The Adoration of the Shepherds," "Jesus blessing little children," "Jesus made known in breaking bread," and his "Descent from the Cross," to see how completely and lovingly he gave his life to the interpretation of our Lord's life and work.

That this was the deliberate object of many of the greatest artists is plain from their confessions. Holman Hunt was frank about this. To his friend Augustus Egg, he said: "My desire is very strong to use my powers to make more tangible Jesus Christ's history and teaching. Art has often illustrated the theme, but it has surrounded it with many enervating fables, and perverted the heroic drama with feeble interpretation. We have reason to believe that the Father of all demands that every generation should contribute its quota of knowledge and wisdom to attain the final purpose; and, however small my mite may be, I wish to do my poor part, and in pursuing this aim I ought not surely to serve art less perfectly."[2]

From the standpoint of culture these canvases devoted to Christ and the Gospels take the highest rank. They are among the world's most glorious

[1] *Great Thoughts*, Vol. IX., p. 215.

[2] *Brothers in Art*, by H. W. Shrewsbury, p. 42 (The Epworth Press).

pictures. Culture in Art has gained through Christianity and, on the other hand, the gain to Christianity from Art is beyond all estimate.

The completeness of the devotion of the artists to Christ is most remarkable. They see Him in all the periods of His life. They portray Him in every scene and catch His every gesture. They follow Him from place to place, in the home, in the carpenter's shop, by the lakeside, in the fields, wherever He journeyed they accompanied Him. There have been no more assiduous New Testament students than these artists, the painters of many lands and of many generations.

It would be easy to compile an artistic commentary of the Gospels. What James Smetham did with his Bible on the margins and on the interleaves, sketching the impressions of the evangel as he devoutly read, the great painters have done on canvases which are now immortal. Christ has been crowned in the world of Art. "All Hail the power of Jesu' Name" has been their cry as they dedicated their gifts for His exaltation.

It is impossible to name all the artists and their work of whom and of which this is true. Their name is legion; their pictures are numberless, but something of the wonderful story must be told.

The Nativity appealed to the imagination of many artists. The announcement to Mary has been immortalized, among others by Arthur Hacker, Burne Jones, and Gabriel Rossetti. Rossetti was only twenty-two years of age when he produced his now famous picture. "The Holy Night," "The Ador-

ation of the Shepherds," "The Star of Bethlehem," "The Wise Men from the East," everything about that first glad Christmas morning excited the genius of these great men of Art. Rubens, Correggio, Murillo, Durer, Jean Portael, Lorenzo de Credi were among the many who have sought to picture the glory of the angels' appearance and the most wondrous scene on earth.

We know little about the childhood of Jesus, apart from the scene when He was twelve years of age and was found in the temple, but His childhood has been glorified in Art. "The Holy Family" has been painted, "The Flight into Egypt," "The Massacre of the Innocents," and "The Triumph of the Innocents" are some of the great pictures we possess. Botticelli, Veronese, Raphael, Rubens, Rembrandt, and Holman Hunt all found scope for their genius in these blissful yet awful themes.

It was Holman Hunt who conceived of "The Triumph of the Innocents." Speaking of this H. W. Shrewsbury beautifully says: "We are accustomed to think of Bethlehem as the city of joy, the glorious spot of happy memories, where Jacob found Rachel, where the sweet idyll of Ruth had its setting, where David fed his flock and received his call to a throne, where the Christ-Child was born. St. Matthew's Gospel recalls the fact that it was a city of sorrow. Here Jacob's saddest hour was passed when near by he buried Rachel; here the Jewish captives, hurried into exile, gathered on the eve of that terrible journey, and

Rachel is represented as weeping over her exiled daughters; here Herod's ruthless soldiery slaughtered the innocents, and once again Rachel had reason to weep for her children. In truth, though for the most part Bethlehem is associated with the exquisite stories of the nativity, it has, besides, its dark and terrible records. What did the mothers of Bethlehem think of the nativity? That event of supreme joy to the world involved for them a frightful sacrifice. Holman Hunt has portrayed in his picture the bright side of that tragedy. The babes who cluster around the infant Christ are not babes of flesh and blood but spirit-children. Some are hardly awake as yet to this new life, and reveal the horrors and suffering of the day of slaughter. Others, conscious of the service they are permitted to render, are joyously triumphant. One in priestly office leads the band, and the spirit-children following cast the symbols of martyrdom in the path of their infant Lord. . . . Mary, full of joy for her own Child's rescue, and full of compassion for the murdered children and their childless mothers, is replacing the garments in which the infant Jesus had been hurriedly wrapped at the escape, when He recognizes the spirit-forms of His little Bethlehem playmates, and leaning towards them, smiles His welcome."[1]

The Boy Jesus, twelve years old, found in the temple in the midst of the doctors, can be seen on many striking canvases. In Holman Hunt's great picture: "The Finding of the Saviour in the

[1] *Brothers in Art*, by H. W. Shrewsbury, pp. 173, 174 (The Epworth Press).

Temple," Mary is seen whispering to her strange Son. Mr. Shrewsbury has put his impressions in noble verse.

" Well may your keen and searching glances bend,
White-bearded rabbis, on this beardless boy,
Whose daring words and face lit up with joy
Your own dead creeds, your own cold hearts transcend.
Too high for you His soaring thoughts extend,
Too deep th' inquiries in His eager lips ;
Ye question Him, His burning zeal outstrips
The vain traditions ye would still defend.

" Even His mother fails to comprehend
The thoughts that glow in these far-seeing eyes ;
' My Son ! My Son ! Oh, wist Thou not,' she cries,
' What fears for Thee beset our journey's end ? '
And strangely answered her that Boy of boys,
' And wist not ye '—His smile her hurt destroys—
' My Father's business every hour employs ? ' "[1]

The eighteen years which follow were the silent years in the life of Jesus. He was known as the Carpenter, and two famous pictures representative of these years are ours : Sir John Millais's " Christ in the House of His Parents," and Holman Hunt's " The Shadow of Death." Holman Hunt's picture can never be forgotten. Its inspiration was genius, the very flash of the Spirit of God. His biographer graphically tells the story.

" The record of St. Mark's Gospel, ' Is not this the Carpenter ? ' arrested the artist's attention. Beyond this flash of light cast by St. Mark upon Christ's occupation, up to the commencement of His ministry, no other writer had dwelt upon this subject except Justin Martyr. Holman Hunt felt the importance of emphasizing this fact in our Lord's human life, and round about this fact his imagination played. Would not the faith of the

[1] *Brothers in Art*, by H. W. Shrewsbury, p. 141.

mother of Jesus be sorely tested when she contrasted the glorious predictions made at His birth with those long years of humble toil in the carpenter's shop, and the more so when she heard the mutterings of the brothers of Jesus that He was 'beside Himself'? How natural that from time to time she should examine with proud and loving interest those royal gifts brought years before by the Wise Men from the East—the golden crown, the sceptre, the kingly raiment, the censer for the enthronement—and strengthen her tested faith by gazing upon these marvellous memorials of the mysterious nativity. The artist would represent her in the act of opening a carved ivory chest which contained these treasures, whilst close at hand her Son was occupied with His arduous toil, working like an ordinary labourer with no indication anywhere apparent of that predicted Messianic splendour. Ah! but it must dawn presently, for what else could be the significance of these costly offerings? And then suddenly a terrible shock and a grievous foreboding—the Carpenter, pausing for a moment in His work, stretching His arms for relief, lifting His face heavenwards, and murmuring words of prayer; the mother glancing up, terrified by the shadow projected upon the wall and tool-rack, the sinister resemblance of a crucified man; and the very moment of the revival of her faith, the moment of the awakening of a presentiment of coming tragedy and of the anguish that would rend her heart."[1]

[1] *Brothers in Art*, by H. W. Shrewsbury, pp. 158, 159.

By means of pictures we can follow Christ throughout all His public ministry. "The Baptism" has been painted and "The Temptation of Jesus." We see Him on many canvases working miracles and befriending the poor. The artists of all lands have conspired to glorify the Name of Christ. These scenes have all been set forth by skilful and loving artistic hands: "The Marriage Feast in Cana of Galilee," "The Miraculous Draught of Fishes," "Jesus Christ healing the Sick," "The Saviour raising the Widow of Nain's Son," "Christ walking on the Sea," "The Raising of Lazarus." Some of the world's most famous painters have given themselves to these scenes: Tintoretto, Veronese, Van Dyck, Raphael and Rubens.

We see Jesus also in His Teaching mission and many to whom He spoke are seen in His company. Many of the parables He spoke have been artistically illustrated. Dean Stanley, in Westminster Abbey, preached a great sermon based on Murillo's six pictures illustrative of the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Holman Hunt's "The Light of the World" is famous in all circles. We think also of "The Widow bestowing her mite," "Christ washeth Peter's feet," and "The Hireling Shepherd."

The glory of the Transfiguration appealed to the genius of both Raphael and Rubens.

"The Last Supper" has a unique place in the story of Christian Art. The best known and, in the judgment of many, the finest portraiture is that by Leonardo da Vinci. The Rev. Jacob W. Richardson in a glowing series of articles on "The Life of

Christ in Art," thus describes this wonderful picture.

"Behind the long spread table the Master is seated with His disciples, six on either side. Through the windows behind the quiet hillsides are seen mellowed with the sombre shades of evening. Leonardo has chosen the dramatic moment when Jesus said: 'One of you shall betray Me.' Instantly the company is thrown into startled excitement and consternation. But no confusion disturbed the mind of Leonardo. In the moment of astonishment he has made each mind to illumine the countenance with its own radiance, and it can be read as one reads a book. Only a profound knowledge of the human mind, and a reverent insight into the characters of those twelve apostles, could have written the story with such powerful eloquence.

"Instinctively the apostles have fallen into four groups. On the near right of the Master is John, and Peter and Judas. The face of Judas is the only one cast in shadow. He starts backward, his right hand gripping the money bag, his left hand up-spread, indicative of the alarm that is vividly written in his furtive eyes and on his deep-shaded countenance. He had little thought, as he seated himself so near the Master, that his nefarious treachery was already known to Him from whom he had received nothing but loving-kindness and magnanimous trust. Now the horror of discovery tortures his soul. John, the beloved disciple, of fine æsthetic countenance, is seated next to Jesus, and almost swooning at the shock; while Peter is stretching over the shoulder of the traitor, his eyes

and face distorted with dismay as he beseeches John to ask Jesus whom it is He refers to. Next to Judas, Andrew holds up his hands in horror as he looks at his wretched and despicable neighbour; James the Less stretches over Andrew's shoulder, touching Peter to tell him that the traitor is by his side; and Bartholomew, at the end of the table, has started to his feet, scrutinizing Judas with eyes that suggest that he is not altogether surprised.

"On the other side of Christ, James, his pained face bent meekly downwards, spreads his arms wide in gesticulation as he says, 'Not me, Lord.' Past him presses Thomas, astonished concern in his upraised eyebrows, his finger upheld as if enquiring, 'One of us, Lord?' Philip, the youngest of the apostles, has risen, and stretching his fine, faithful, but pained face forward, brings his fingers round to his breast as he seems to say, 'It can never be me, my Master. I have seen the Father and it sufficeth.' Matthew dramatically extends his indignant face towards Simon and Thaddæus, his hands stretched accusingly aslant towards Judas, as he seems to be saying, 'It is right what I whispered to you. It *is* he.' Simon also turns away, an expression of pained disgust and withering contempt on his contorted face, as his back-turned thumb points to him who afterwards bought the potter's field, and Thaddæus, at the end of the table, frowns and tightens his lips with indignant contempt, and holds forth his hands towards Judas, as he seems to say: 'Not in us, Lord, but in him, is the betrayer.' . . . .

"Amidst all the confusion and gesticulation sits the sublime Master of men in calm dignity, and with an ineffable pathos on His noble face—nay, not *amidst* them, He seems to tower above them all with the infinite grace of a supernatural aristocracy. Nowhere have we seen such psychological power and variety expressed in religious art, yet withal leaving the Lord Jesus the dominant and entrancing centre. The passions and emotions of our human nature are attractive and arresting for awhile, but ever above them rises the steady, strong soul that is founded in the eternal love of God."[1]

In connection with this scene we love to think of James Smetham's "Hymn of the Last Supper." The germ of it was in one of his squares, the little pictures he used to paint and sketch in his Bible and in his diaries. He matured it for fifteen years. It was suggested by the text: "And when they had sung an hymn they went out to the Mount of Olives." Smetham pictures the disciples singing and Judas lingering awhile to listen. What were the thoughts of Judas as he went out to fulfil his treacherous compact?

The Passion of our Lord stirred the Christian artists to the deeps, and all the wealth of their imagination and all their love and faith were centred in their holy portrayal of these last, sad scenes. Both Sir Noel Paton and Madox Brown felt the awe of "Gethsemane." "The Agony in the Garden" was described. "The Remorse of

[1] *The Aldersgate Magazine*, 1920, pp. 489-490.

Judas" was portrayed. "Christ before Caiaphas," "Christ leaving the Prætorium," "Peter's Denial," "Christ before Pilate," and "The Dream of Pilate's Wife" were the titles of illuminating pictures. Munkacsy's "Christ before Pilate" is known to all. Who can forget their first sight of that immortal work?

No wonder that the Christian artists gathered round the Cross. In their devotion we see the fulfilment of the Redeemer's prediction. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me!" Jesus said, and the Saviour on the Cross has drawn the souls and the gifts of many of the most illustrious and devout painters. We see "The Women of the Crucifixion," "The Man of Sorrows," "Despised and Rejected," and all the sad dread sights.

The glory of the Resurrection appealed to these artistic Christians and Christian artists. We see "St. John leading the Virgin Mary from the Tomb," "The Holy Women at the Tomb," "Christ and Mary at the Sepulchre," the Two "On the Way to Emmaus," and "The Supper at Emmaus." "The Ascension" also has been pictorially described. What genius was thus concentrated on these holy and world-transforming scenes!

Thinking of the Ascension we are reminded of The Chapel of the Ascension in Bayswater Road, London, where Christianity and Culture are so beautifully blended. The Chapel was built by Mrs. Russell-Gurney as a memorial to her husband. Her thought was "to plant in some great highway in London a place of rest for wayfarers and for

prayer and meditation, wherein body, mind, and spirit, oppressed by the hurrying roar of the city's life, might find repose and a refreshing feast ever liberally spread upon its walls for whosoever will to enter." The pious foundress commissioned Frederic Shields to cover its walls with paintings, and the last twenty-five years of his life were devoted to this holy task. Unfortunately the generous lady died before the work was completed; Frederic Shields lived but a few months after his crowning achievement was done.

The Chapel of the Ascension is unique. There on the walls Shields painted the story of the Old and New Testaments. All his previous work had prepared him for this consummate endeavour. He had been a daily student of the Scriptures; a life of prayer he had sedulously cultivated. With this spiritual equipment he brought a high artistic genius. The result is there for all to see. In the antechapel are the great pictures, "The Gate of Death," "Man Repulses the Appeal of Conscience," "Man hearkens to the Voice of Conscience," "Christ blessing little children," "Ignorance, Science and Wisdom," and "The Good Shepherd." The west wall portrays "The Creation and Fall of Man and the Promise of Redemption." The north wall is devoted to the "Apostles and the History of the Gospels." The south wall shows the "Prophets and the Acts of the Apostles." The east wall describes the "Passion, Resurrection, and the Ascension of Christ," the "Wise and Foolish Virgins," "Faith, Hope, Love, and Patience."

Dr. Alexander McLaren was a friend of Frederic Shields. In the great preacher's study there was a painting of Paul, the gift of the artist. Dr. McLaren had had it framed and often found inspiration from it. The sight of it was a tonic to him. Frederic Shields heard of his friend's illness just a few days before he died and this is what he wrote: "I recall what his warm interest in me has been from the day long ago, when I was privileged with an introduction to him, how steadfast and helpful has been his friendship in many relations, ever entering with earnest sympathy into my sorrows and joys alike—his friendship has been a bright gift of God to my being."[1]

Hugh Price Hughes was also a friend of this artist, and greatly interested in his work as it proceeded in The Chapel of the Ascension. "My father admired in particular the fresco which depicts the quarrel of the Apostles when they strove with each other as to who should have the highest place in the kingdom," his daughter writes, and she adds this footnote: "Our Lord's Baptism in the same series was a great favourite of my father's. 'It's so original,' he used to say."[2]

Primitive Methodists may be pardoned for their pride and pleasure in the famous picture in which some of their own people are depicted. We refer to "*Primitive Methodists: St. Ives,*" the picture painted by W. H. Y. Titcomb. For twenty years

[1] *Dr. McLaren of Manchester*, by E. T. McLaren, p. 47 (Hodder & Stoughton).

[2] *The Life of Hugh Price Hughes*, by His Daughter, p. 595 (Hodder & Stoughton).

the artist had lived amongst the people he put on the canvas. He loved and revered them, and in his wonderful picture we see them at worship in the chapel. For the centenary issue of *The Aldersgate Magazine* the Rev. F. R. Brunskill wrote for us a description of the picture. The picture "has been carried to all the world's great Art Exhibitions. It won a gold medal at the Paris Salon, and a medal at the World's Fair in Chicago."

Mr. Brunskill says; "The central figure facing the spectator is Captain Dick Harry. He used to be the beloved Captain of St. Ives. What a radiant countenance he wears: it is the mirror of the pure heart. We may well ask why the face of a man of God is so much more beautiful than that of a man in the street? He was a class-leader for forty years with never a thought of resigning. Though unlettered, he knew his Bible by heart. His one joy in life was to know the covenants of God and to obey them. What man can do more?

"The man sitting on the form with his back turned, was known by two names. His real name is Veal, but that used by intimate fisher-folk was 'Old Nubbs.' He was a kind soul, patient with youth, sympathetic and strong in faith. The red handkerchief, the old-fashioned spectacles, and hymn-book on the seat are symbols of a simple life. The boy sitting next to him, and in the same prayerful attitude, is Georgie Murt. A beautiful contrast, Age and Youth, side by side in a common act of worship! What has Georgie become? His youthful companion, whose face we see, intelligent,

bright, playful, is Tommy Quick. George Quick, the elder, was a great local preacher, and a real saint. He appears as chief praying figure in another famous picture of Mr. Titcomb's, *Piloting Her Home*. The old man with uplifted hands under the pulpit is the sainted Tom Bassett. We are deeply impressed by his attitude. The frail, uplifted hands are beautiful, prophetic, after the manner of Moses with Aaron and Hur. Then there is the aged brother who leans over the pew back under the gallery. He is Nathaniel Oliver. Note how each has his own habit of worship ; they do not sit in a pew or in a row like so many peas in a pod.

" We turn now to the lady in the pew behind the central figure. She was known as Grannie Veal. She has the chief place in the picture already referred to. On one occasion she was very ill, and thought to be dying. Mr. Titcomb, hearing of it, went to see her. It was on the eve of his departure to Italy, and he thought it might be the last time he would see her. While he was in the cottage the fishermen returned from their boats, and just as they were, they gathered around her bed to pray with Grannie Veal. The contrast between the frail old lady, her skin looking like alabaster, and the bronzed fishermen, and the intense religious earnestness of all present, struck Mr. Titcomb as so beautiful, that he at once covenanted with his heart to depict the scene at the earliest opportunity. He went to Italy, and was away a year. On his return he found his friend still alive, she being then eighty-three. He there-

upon began his picture. He persuaded those concerned to come to his studio and pose for him. He rigged up an extemporized bedroom, and carefully proceeded with the work. He was all the time invisible to his models and could only view them through his clasped fingers through a hole in the sail he hung up. The result is—*Piloting Her Home*—a picture now in Toronto. But Mr. Titcomb kindly presented the chapel trustees with a cartoon of it, along with another, called *The Mariners' Sunday School*, and these are hanging in the chapel. In no other Nonconformist chapel in the world are we likely to find any works of Art of this character.

"The remaining persons depicted are as follows: it is Job Stevens who is sitting next to Grannie Veal; and between him and Nathaniel Oliver, with only a part of his head in view, is Dan Stevens. In the gallery, left to right, is little Miss Murt; and in the front pew, her mother, Mrs. Murt. The third figure, with only part of his head showing, is Willie Murt. The man in the far corner is Jim Richards; and last, the gentleman in the pulpit, is Mr. Grear, an artist friend of Mr. Titcomb, who kindly posed for him."[1]

Mr. Brunskill acknowledged his indebtedness to the Rev. J. Sadler for the names of the persons described.

We may add that the original "*Primitive Methodists: St. Ives*" is in the possession of the Dudley Corporation Art Gallery.

[1] *The Aldersgate Magazine*, January, 1919.

All who love the Name of Christ may well rejoice in this. In many ways the world is being won for Christ. For many preachers and teachers the Church of God gives thanks. We are grateful for the enthusiastic advocacy of the artists, men who have found their best culture in Christ, and who in gratitude are showing to those who are willing to see and learn the supremacy of the Man Christ Jesus.

CHAPTER VI.

Christianity and Music.

IT will be instantly admitted that one of the surest and most beautiful forms of culture is music. Walter Pater said that "All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music." The love of music is culture; the understanding of music is refinement of the purest order. The musical circles of life are among the cultured circles of life.

Music, indeed, is a language, the language of the heart. Jean Paul Richter's parable tells the secret of music's power. The loving genius of all deep-feeling men once came to Jupiter, he says. "Divine Father!" cried the suppliant, "give to thy poor human creatures a better speech, for they have only words when they wish to express how they suffer, rejoice, and love." "Have I not given to them tears," said Jupiter, "the tears of joy, the tears of grief, and the sweeter tears of love?" "Yes!" said the genius, "but tears do not express all that is in the heart. Divine Father! Give to

them a better language, so that they may be able to express themselves fully. Give to them a new language of the heart, my Father!" Jupiter listened and heard, in the heavens above, the Spirit of Music making the heavenly spheres harmonious. He summoned the Spirit, and said: "Go to men below and teach them thy language!"

The parable is the truth. Music is of heaven. It is God's gift, and it is the gift of a new language, the speech of the deep, unfathomable and otherwise inexpressible things.

Wagner said that "Music is a Woman." We associate cold reason and frigid argument with men. In women we find warm and deep feeling, the tenderest sensibility and refinement. So music is the language of feeling. Words are futile to express our deepest and truest thoughts. Music is the only speech by which the heart's thoughts can be uttered. Mozart used to say that, whenever he beheld a great and glorious mountain or saw an exquisite piece of scenery, it spoke to him and said: "Play me on the organ! Turn me into music!" When Mendelssohn was asked what the Hebrides were like he said that he could not answer in words, that the Hebrides could only be felt in music. Then he sat down to the piano and, when his fingers glided over the keys, the roll of the waves was heard and the wailing of the wind. Mendelssohn used to write his letters to his sister in music. Felix and Fanny Mendelssohn understood each other so well, their love was so deep and their souls so akin, that no mere words could

suffice for communion. They were driven to music. He would write to her thus: "This is what I have to say to you to-day! This is how I think of you to-day!" and he would write a few bars of music. When she received the score she would sit down to her piano and the music interpreted to her her absent brother's thoughts and feelings.

How like this is to Christianity! Both are gifts. Music is a gift.

> "Thou Lord, art the Father of Music,
> Sweet sounds are a whisper from Thee."

Russell Lowell was conscious of this.

> "For whom the heart of man shuts out
> Sometimes the heart of God takes in,
> And fences them all round about
> With silence 'mid the world's loud din,
> And one of His great charities
> Is Music."

And Christianity is the Father's gift. God gave His only-begotten Son. Christianity as a revelation, an experience and an inspiration is a gift. Moreover, Christianity and Music are alike in this, that they are both the language of the heart. Christianity is the appeal of God's heart to the human heart. Jesus is Heaven's language. He is the Word, the Thought of God expressed, and He is apprehended, not by the reason, but by the higher reason, the faith which is the soul's emotion and power. "It is the heart that makes the theologian." It is the heart that makes the Christian. "The heart has reasons that the reason does not know," and one of the reasons, unknown

to the reason, that the heart cherishes is the insight that music gives into the deep things of God revealed in Christ. There are not only resemblances between Christianity and Music; there are affinities. Music *is* Christianity and Christianity *is* Music.

How else can we explain the fascination which Christianity has exercised over the musicians? The truth is apparent the moment we think of the lives and works of the world's most famous musical composers. They knew that Christianity was the highest revelation of God, and in music they felt it and interpreted it, helping others to feel it by means of their harmonies. Many were conscious of Christianity as an experience of forgiveness and reconciliation and of the life hidden in God in Christ. How else than in music could this blissful life be explained? And the inspiration of Christianity was ever present. It moved them to the deeps, it excited their musical powers, it incited them by music's art to give the glory to Him who came to abolish all discords and to give the keynote to every human life. It has been well said that "the poet with his pen, the painter with his brush, the sculptor with his chisel, the architect with his plan, the musician with his lyre, are all in Holy Orders."

It is the delightful fact that many of the most gifted and famous musicians devoted themselves to the service of Christ in their art. These names immediately come to mind: Sebastian Bach—"the father of modern music"—Handel, Haydn, Mozart,

Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Gounod, Rossini, Schubert, Wagner, Spohr, Gade, Gaum, Schumann, Gaul, Sterndale Bennett, Stainer and Sullivan. These and others of the musical composers found their best themes in the Gospels. They were free to choose, and they proved their musical insight and wisdom in choosing the best, the life and words and works of Him who came to fill the world with music. They felt that the truth of Christ and the truth in Christ were capable of musical exposition. They were deeply conscious that there was music in Christianity and so they translated Christianity into music.

Nothing is clearer than the fact that these musical masters were all students of the Gospels. They took no narrow view of their art, but they instinctively felt that the finest subjects were those inspired by Christ. It is the truth, indeed, that their greatest compositions were those associated and identified with Christ. It is no exaggeration to say that their fidelity to Jesus is the secret of their renown. They poured the spikenard of their love and devotion upon the head of their Lord and like Mary they have gained immortality. Singing of Jesus they sang their best and have come to power. It is the proof that Jesus inspires the greatest gifts and develops the most wonderful capacities. We are not unmindful of the beauty and splendour of the music inspired by other subjects and objects, rather we glory the more by contrast in the music which is specifically and entirely Christian. Supposing everything Christian

were eliminated from music? Immediately we have the sense of tragic loss. The deletion of a few oratorios would not be the deletion of Christianity. The influence of Christ is world-wide and very far-reaching in this most beauteous sphere of culture.

The whole life of Jesus has been turned into music. At once we think of Handel's "Messiah," the most glorious musical biography of Jesus in the possession of men. We have listened to it scores of times and it never wearies. It becomes increasingly fascinating and illuminating and inspiring. One of his biographers says: "Handel possessed an inexhaustible fund of melody of the noblest order; an almost unequalled command of musical expression; perfect power over all the resources of his science; the faculty of wielding huge masses of tone with perfect ease and felicity; and he was without rival in the sublimity of ideas. The problem which he so successfully solved in the oratorio was that of giving such dramatic force to the music, in which he clothed the sacred texts, as to be able to dispense with all scenic and stage effects. . . . . The great man died on Good Friday night, 1759, aged seventy-five years. He had often wished 'he might breathe his last on Good Friday, in hope of meeting his good God, his sweet Lord and Saviour, on the day of His resurrection.' The old blind musician had his wish."[1]

We think of Gounod's "Redemption," Graum's "The Passion of our Lord," Haydn's "The

[1] *Great Musical Composers* (The Scott Library), by G. T. Ferris, p. 35 (The Walter Scott Publishing Co. Ltd.).

Passion," Schubert's Communion Services, Spohr's "Calvary," and the Passion Music of Sebastian Bach. Bach's position in the musical world is without parallel. "The first time Mozart heard one of Bach's hymns, he said: 'Thank God! I learn something absolutely new.' . . . As Spenser is called the poet for poets, and Laplace the mathematician for mathematicians, so Bach is the musician for musicians. While Handel may be considered a purely independent and parallel growth, it is not too much to assert that without Sebastian Bach and his matchless studies for the piano, organ, and orchestra, we could not have had the varied musical development in sonata and symphony from such masters as Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven."[1]

The Editress of Great Musical Composers (Elizabeth A. Sharp) has an interesting note about Gounod. She says: "Gounod is a strongly religious man, and more than once has been on the point of entering the Church. It is, therefore, not surprising that he should have in his later life turned his attention to the finest form of sacred music, the oratorio. His first and greatest work of this class is his 'Redemption,' produced at the Birmingham Festival of 1882, and conducted by himself. It was well received, and has met with success at all subsequent performances. It is intended to illustrate 'three great facts on which the existence of the Christian Church depends. . . . The Passion and death of the Saviour, His glorious

[1] *Great Musical Composers*, p. 6.

life on earth from His Resurrection to His Ascension, and finally the spread of Christianity in the world through the mission of the Apostles.' These three parts of the present trilogy are preceded by a Prologue on the Creation and Fall of our first parents, and the promise of the Redeemer."[1]

All the life of Jesus appealed to the musicians, but we can understand how they were drawn to His Passion. Only the heart can feel this, and music is the only avenue through which we can truly enter into the sorrow of our Saviour. Beethoven composed "The Mount of Olives" and Spohr interpreted "The Last Judgment."

All the places visited by our Lord have inspired musical creations: "The Holy City," "Nazareth," "Bethany," "Calvary."

Many of the scenes in the life of the Saviour have been expressed in the terms of music: "The Raising of Lazarus," "The Raising of the Daughter of Jairus," and other miracles.

The outstanding episodes of our Lord's life on earth have all been articulated in the language of music: The Advent (Bach's Christmas Oratorio), the Crucifixion and the Ascension.

All who met with Christ have been made the subjects of musical biographies; "St. John the Baptist," "St. John the Evangelist," "St. Peter," "The Woman of Samaria," "Mary Magdalene." "The Apostles" is the title of Edward Elgar's oratorio and Mendelssohn immortalises "St. Paul."

The undying words of Christ have all been sung

[1] *Great Musical Composers*, p. 309.

by the masters of music. "The Seven Words of our Saviour on the Cross," "The Good Shepherd," "The Prodigal Son," and "God so loved the world."

If we include the Old Testament preparation and forecast the evidence becomes more striking and complete. We think of Haydn's "Creation," Mendelssohn's "Elijah," Armes' "Hezekiah," Barnby's "Rebekah," Beethoven's "Engedi or David in the Wilderness," F. Bridge's "Mount Moriah," E. T. Chipp's "Job" and "Naomi," Rossini's "Moses in Egypt," and Handel's galaxy of musical biographies: "Esther," "Israel in Egypt," "Judas Maccabeus," "Samson," "Solomon," "Jephtha," "Joshua," "Deborah," and "Saul."

It will be clear that we are not making too high a claim when we assert that Christianity has been the source of much of the finest music in the world. It was a sure and holy intuition which led the musical conceivers and creators to the revelation of God in the Old Testament, and to the final and shining revelation of the Father's love in the Christ of the Gospels.

Even more than this can be affirmed. Christianity got into music because Christianity was in the musicians. They themselves were in love with Christ. Of many of them He was the Saviour, to all of them He was the Lord. Christianity was an experience and a daily inspiration. They were Christian musicians and musical Christians.

Beethoven's confession is significant: "I have

no friends. I must needs live alone, by myself, but I well know that God is nearer to me in my art than others. I converse with Him without fear, evermore I have acknowledged and understood Him."

Mozart was similarly sensitive. "Friends who have no religion cannot long be my friends," he says. And again: "I have such a sense of religion that I shall never do anything that I would not do before the whole world."

When Handel was asked what his feelings were when he was composing the "Messiah," he said: "Whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, God knoweth." When he was composing "He was despised" a friend found him in tears.

Speaking of his great oratorio, "The Creation," Haydn confessed: "When I was engaged in composing it I always felt myself so deeply penetrated with religious feeling that before I sat down to work I earnestly prayed to God that He would enable me to praise Him worthily." At the grand performance of "The Creation" in London in 1808, Haydn was present. He was not able to take part. An old man of seventy-six years, he was seated listening. His presence created much excitement. When the chorus and orchestra burst forth in "And there was light," the audience sprang to their feet and cheered the old man. Raising himself in his chair, he cried: "No! No! not from me, but," pointing to Heaven, "from thence, from Heaven above, comes all!"

Dr. R. P. Downes speaks of Mendelssohn as "a lovely character." "If Beethoven is the Shakespeare of Music, and Handel its Milton, then Mendelssohn is its Tennyson and Wordsworth combined." He quotes a writer in the *Edinburgh Review* who says: "Rarely, if ever, has culture been more wisely and liberally bestowed. . . . . He was as gracious as he was gifted; evil seemed to glance aside from him; temptation to get no hold on him. He was singularly exact without pedantry. Everything that he acquired was ranged according to its value in the chambers of a memory which nothing seemed to encumber. . . . . Though he was full of vivacity and humour, endowed with a keenness of observation not to be surpassed, there was not a grain of mockery in his composition. He delighted to admire and to venerate. In the practice of that art which he exercised as naturally as other men exercise the common gift of speech, in the regulation of his life, in his public responsibilities, and in his domestic duties and affections, the whole career of Felix Mendelssohn bore the stamp of a moral beauty of elevation not common among the sons of men. Nothing vulgar, affected, or unclean could approach him; no ungenerous thought ever touched him; he combined the wit and readiness of a man of the world with the affectionate simplicity of boyhood. . . . . He had a painter's eye and a poet's heart. Everything that was good and beautiful in Art or in Nature—no matter what the world, no matter what the climate, no matter what the period—was not so

much seen and studied, as possessed by him. He was a ready and exquisite linguist, endowed with that instinct for subtlety in language of which many less perfectly educated persons never dream. . . . . He was a keen lover of literature. . . . . 'Complete' might have been the one word written on his tombstone, could it be applied to any human being."[1]

We feel how true all this is and of how much the mind of Christ was in him when we remember his "Hymn of Praise" and "Songs without Words."

> "Such songs have power to quiet
> The heated pulse of care:
> And come like the benediction
> Which follows after prayer."

"We know of nothing," Dr. Downes says, "in the kingdom of music which imparts such a delicious sense of rest as these exquisite harmonies. They fall on the soul as twilight falls on the heated world, or as sleep falls on tired eyelids, or as snowflakes fall on fevered lips. They fold us in the clasp of an infinite peace, and are as the visitations of the Comforter when He broods dove-like, and calm, above the wearied spirit."[2]

When we think of these Christian musicians and the music of oratorios and cantatas, chants and anthems, hymns and songs, we do not wonder that music is one of the evangelizing ministries in the world. The truest culture is being promoted. The faith and hope and love of Christ are in these musical compositions, and in hearing them they

[1] *Great Thoughts*, Vol. X., p. 280.
[2] *Great Thoughts*, Vol. X., p. 283.

diffuse themselves into the souls of men. It is one more sign of the supremacy of Christ. He has ever been wont to enlist the best talents, to invite the highest gifts and to bring men to their greatest development and usefulness. Music is full of Christ, and, as it sings itself in the hearts of men, Christ finds entrance and culture is begun.

Music, too, is a unifying influence. It is felt in the churches in the community of song. The Saviour's prayer is answered the moment His people begin to sing. They are "one," one in Him and one in each other.

"Moravian hymn and Roman chant
In one devotion blend,
To speak the soul's eternal want
Of Him the inmost Friend.
One prayer soars cleansed with martyr-fire,
One choked with sinner's tears,
In Heaven, both meet in one desire,
And God one music hears."

CHAPTER VII.

Christianity and Poetry.

POETRY is one of the most obvious and richest forms of culture. "Poets are born, not made," we commonly hear, and thus poets belong by birth to the society of the cultured.

Ceaseless attempts have been and are being made to define poetry and every attempt brings us nearer to the feeling of the truth.

George MacDonald affirms that "Poetry is the cream of a people's thought." That cannot be doubted. The rarest, the most lucid, the most memorable and the most beauteous form of speech is that cast in poetic mould. The poets are seers. They are the visionists of life and knowledge. They see facts without any intervening veil and, because they are poets, they can express their visions in language which is equal and worthy of the thought. Coulson Kernahan defines poetry as "Poetic thought *plus* poetic expression." Neither is poetry without the other. If a poetic thought be articulated in common and unpoetic language the result is not poetry; on the other hand, no charm and beauty of poetic language can ever supply the lack of a genuine poetic thought. Both are needed. The thought must be conceived on

high and pure poetic lines and expressed in true and complete poetic terms before the product can be described as poetry.

Matthew Arnold is felicitous in his chapter on "The Study of Poetry." He says: "The future of poetry is immense, because in poetry, where it is worthy of its high destinies, our race, as time goes on, will find an ever surer and surer stay. There is not a creed which is not shaken, not an accredited dogma which is not shown to be questionable, not a received tradition which does not threaten to dissolve. Our religion has materialized itself in the fact, in the supposed fact; it has attached its emotion to the fact, and now the fact is failing it. But for poetry the idea is everything; the rest is a world of illusion, of divine illusion. Poetry attached its emotion to the idea; the idea *is* the fact. The strongest part of our religion to-day is its unconscious poetry."[1]

He quotes approvingly Wordsworth's definition of Poetry as "the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge." Matthew Arnold thoroughly believed in the immortality of poetry. He says: "The best poetry is what we want; the best poetry will be found to have a power of forming, sustaining, and delighting us, as nothing else can."[2]

He admits that it is not easy to define poetry. "Critics give themselves great labour," he says, "to draw out what in the abstract constitutes the characters of a high quality of poetry. It is much

[1] *Essays in Criticism*, Second Series, by Matthew Arnold, p. 1 (Macmillan & Co., Ltd.).

[2] Page 5.

better simply to have recourse to concrete examples :—to take specimens of poetry of the high, the very highest quality, and to say ; The characters of a high quality of poetry are what is expressed *there*. They are far better recognized by being felt in the verse of the master, than by being perused in the prose of the critic. . . . . They are in the matter and substance of the poetry, and they are in its manner and style. . . . The substance and matter of the best poetry acquire their special character from possessing, in an eminent degree, truth and seriousness. We may add yet further, what is in itself evident, that to the style and manner of the best poetry their special character, their accent, is given by their diction, and, even yet more, by their movement."[1]

Of the pre-eminent value of poetry he speaks with confidence. "Poetry is nothing less than the most perfect speech of man, that in which he comes nearest to being able to utter the truth."[2]

"The crown of literature is poetry," he definitely affirms.

Shelley was competent to speak on this high theme. In his "A Defence of Poetry" he tells us what he conceived the Muse to be. "Poetry is the expression of the Imagination," he says, and further: "Poetry is not, like reasoning, a power to be asserted according to the determination of the will. A man cannot say, 'I will compose poetry.' The greatest poet even cannot say it ; for the mind

[1] Pages 20, 21, 22. [2] Page 128.

in creation is as a fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness; this power arises from within, like the colour of a flower, which fades and changes as it is developed, and the conscious portions of our nature are unprophetic either of its approach or its departure. . . . . Poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds."

In "The Soul of Modern Poetry" Dr. R. H. Strachan again and again speaks of the poet's heart and of the nature and power of poetry. "The poet expresses what we cannot express for ourselves. Through him, as high priest of life's mysteries, we know that we are understood, and are cheered by an answering call in the great universe. The call is more than a reverberating echo; for the poet must be regarded not merely as one who has a particular gift of words, but above all as possessing a sensitiveness of perception denied to other men."[1]

There is real truth in this distinction he draws. "The effect of all great poetry is in the end not to speak, but to suggest the truth; and this power of suggestion indicates that the heart of poetry lies much deeper than even 'the best words in the best order.'"[2]

A poet—Philip James Bailey—expresses the heart of this in a memorable couplet:

> "Poets are all who love—who feel great truths—
> And tell them."

[1] *The Soul of Modern Poetry*, by R. H. Strachan, D.D., p. 7 (Hodder & Stoughton).
[2] Page 101.

Now, if all this be true, if poetry be the most lucid speech of the highest things, the finest poetry must be that inspired by Christianity. Christianity is the supreme revelation of God. There is no truth comparable to the truth as it is *in* Jesus. Jesus *is* the Truth. It would be folly for men to ignore this truth. It would be equal folly to minimise its significance and importance. The truth that Jesus speaks, the truth that Jesus brings, the truth that Jesus *is*, is the greatest and highest truth in human knowledge. He is the perfect revelation of the Father. The pregnant and beautiful word of the late Dr. A. B. Bruce comes to mind. "If God be like Jesus, the world has reason to be glad."

The truth has been spoken in diverse forms. Theologians and divines, expositors and evangelists, have sought constantly to express the truth of Christ. The poets, too, have been drawn to Christ. He has appealed to their highest instincts and powers, and it is the glorious fact that the poets have articulated for us the message of God as spoken and enshrined in Jesus. Moreover, many of the greatest poets have been lowly and reverent and loving believers of our Lord. They have owned His unique sway and they have found in His love and redemption the secret of inward peace. These men and women of poetic genius have been inspired by their faith and love in Christ. Many of them were devout and devoted Christians. They were of those

> "Who sing unconscious of their song,
> Whose lips are in their lives."

To know Christ, to enter into His mind, to interpret His message in modern language became to them their chiefest and holiest duty. To serve Him thus were an honour indeed. They knew whom they had believed. They knew that in Him they saw the Father. They knew, too, that His Cross was for the saving of the world.

We submit that all this was inevitable. Since poetry is the speech of the most perfect truth, and speech in its purest form, it must find its crown and blessedness in the truth of Christianity. It is indeed only in poetry that the divine revelation finds its loveliest literary expression.

All this is affirmed in various ways by Dr. Strachan. "Our best modern poetry is filled with a sense of home-sickness which continually breaks through the bonds that doom men to acquiescence in things as they are. It appears as a continual quest for beauty, and a continual welcoming of it as it appears 'in the stream of lovely things—the stream that flows and yet remains.' The poet is animated by the same daring and imaginative faith which possesses the soul of the Hebrew poet and prophet, who, looking upon waterless Jerusalem, yet exclaimed, 'Lo! a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of our God.'"[1]

If it be true, as Sir Henry Newbolt has said, that the criterion of great poetry is that it "touches the universal longing for a perfect world," then great poetry, the very greatest, must

[1] *The Soul of Modern Poetry*, p. 39.

turn to Christianity as Christianity is the only faith that can make possible a perfect world.[1]

Dr. Strachan leaves us in no doubt about this. Christianity needs the poets and the poets need Christianity. "The poet does not inhabit a world of pure argument, but a world of passion and emotion. His business is not to make a new world, as has been said, but to advocate it; not to save men's souls, but to make them worth saving. He makes men worth saving by keeping alive those human emotions and passions which are to-day the sign of a life that is striving not to escape from, or to submit to, but to conquer the misery, ugliness, and sin that stand in the way of a perfect world. Poetry is essential to the creation of a new world; it reinvigorates and encourages the soul. Religious dogma must again become poetry, 'truth carried alive into the heart by passion,' in Wordsworth's phrase, if the world is to be changed. All dogmas were originally doxologies, and all creeds must be capable of being sung."[2]

He quotes Francis Thompson's dictum: "The devil can do many things. But the devil cannot write poetry. He may mar a poet but he cannot make a poet." No! Evil is the antithesis of poetry. The Good is poetic. God is the fount of poetry. And only good men and women can really write great poetry. Emerson always insisted on this. "The foundation of culture as of character is at last the moral sentiment." "If we live truly

[1] Quoted by Dr. Strachan, p. 43.
[2] Pages 70, 71.

we shall see truly." "So to *be* is the sole inlet of so to *know*."

Speaking of Emerson, Coulson Kernahan says: "To him all art, all poetry, are but thoughts in the brain of God; and God's thoughts can never be anything but beautiful."[1]

All that Jesus said, and did, and suffered, and secured is pure poetry. And all that needs expression. It has been and is being expressed by poets who have found in Christ the Life, the Truth, the Way.

It is impossible to name all who could be mentioned in this connection. They were truly cultured, cultured in mind and in speech, but most of all cultured in soul. Their names are precious; their poems are treasured. They have become part of the air we breathe. We think of William Wordsworth. At once we recall what the *Lyrical Ballads* did for Mark Rutherford. In his *Autobiography* he tells that the reading of the poems entirely changed his life. He was reminded of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus and the vision that came to him on the way to Damascus. A similar experience came to Mark Rutherford through the reading of Wordsworth's poems. It was in the third year of his college course. Up till then his life had been external. Nothing apparently had touched him. The *Lyrical Ballads* set his soul in motion and a growth began that never ceased in the culture of his inward life.[2]

[1] *Wise Men and a Fool*, p. 239.

[2] *The Autobiography*, by Mark Rutherford, p. 18 (T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd.).

Of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow we also think, who on Mr. Clement Shorter's testimony, was the best read poet for sixty years. All his poems breathe the true Christian thought and feeling. We think of William Cowper, John Keats, Leigh Hunt, Mrs. Hemans, John Keble, Jean Ingelow, Thomas Hood, Madam Guyon, and John Henry Newman.

It is equally true of the poets who are obedient to the heavenly vision in our own day. Their name is legion. Among them we delight to name: John Drinkwater, Walter de la Mare, T. E. Brown, Rudyard Kipling, Alfred Noyes, Ralph Hodgson, W. B. Yeats, Robert Bridges, Robert Graves, W. W. Gibson, and many others.

Philip James Bailey is immortalized by one great poem, "Festus." The poem is full of lines and couplets charged with truth and fire. They have become current in our speech.

"Let each man think himself an act of God—
His mind a thought, his life a breath of God."

"True bliss is to be found in holy life;
In charity to men—in love to God."

"To dignify the day with deeds of good,
To constellate the eve with holy thoughts;
This is to live."

"Man's conscience is an angel or a fiend,
According to his deeds."

"Death is another life. We bow our heads
At going out, we think, and enter straight
Another golden chamber of the King's,
Larger than this we leave, and lovelier."

"We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.
We should count time by heart throbs. He lives most
Who thinks most—feels the noblest—acts the best."

Sir Edwin Arnold's "The Light of the World" was designed to show how immeasurably greater was Jesus to Buddha whom he had portrayed in "The Light of Asia."

Alfred, Lord Tennyson, was the embodiment of Christian culture. That he was cultured his poems prove; that he was a Christian his life and character reveal.

A. C. Benson, in his admirable "life" of Tennyson, gives us radiant pictures of the poet's fervent Christian experience. He is indeed a living presence in these vivid pages. His biographer says: "That he regarded the Person and teaching of Christ with the deepest reverence is clear enough. He wrote, in 1839, to his future wife, that he was staying with "an old friend" at Mablethorpe. "He and his wife," he writes, "are two perfectly honest Methodists. When I came, I asked her after news, and she replied, 'Why, Mr. Tennyson, there is only one piece of news that I know, that Christ died for *all* men.' And I said to her: 'That is old news, and good news, and new news'; wherewith the good woman seemed satisfied. I was half yesterday reading anecdotes of Methodist ministers, and liking to read them too . . . . and of the teaching of Christ, that purest light of God."[1]

Once, we are told, while walking in the garden, a visitor asked him what he thought of our Saviour. "He said nothing at first, then he stopped by a beautiful flower, and said, 'What the sun is to that flower, Jesus Christ is to my soul. He is the Sun of my soul.'"[2]

[1] *Tennyson*, by A. C. Benson, pp. 109, 110 (Methuen & Co., Ltd.). [2] Page 110.

His biographer writes plain words in regard to Tennyson's religious beliefs. "Tennyson said that Christianity, with its Divine morality, but without the central figure of Christ, the Son of Man, would become cold; and that it is fatal for religion to lose its warmth; that *The* Son of Man was the most tremendous title possible; that the forms of Christian religion would alter, but that the Spirit of Christ would grow from more to more 'in the roll of the ages'; that his line,

"Ring in the Christ that is to be,"

points to the time when Christianity without bigotry will triumph, when the controversies of creeds shall have vanished."[1]

We quote these further self-revelations for the truths they enshrine and the beauty of their phrasing. "My most passionate desire is to have a clearer and fuller vision of God." "God reveals Himself in every individual soul, and my idea of heaven is the perpetual ministry of one soul to another." "Prayer is the opening a sluice between the ocean and the little channel." "Motive consecrates life."

Mr. Benson states quite clearly Tennyson's faith. "Tennyson's creed was a simple one, and grew simpler as he grew older. The two cardinal points of his faith were his belief in God, and his belief in the immortality of man. On these great thoughts the life of his soul was nourished—the Fatherhood of God, and the Life of the World to come."[2]

[1] Page 111. [2] Page 105.

Students will be familiar with Theodore Watts-Dunton's portrait of Tennyson in *Old Familiar Faces*. He speaks of Tennyson's personal charm, which he believed to be the combination of "a great veracity of soul," "an uncompromising directness of speech" and "a noble and a splendid courtesy."

His son gives us this statement of his father's religious convictions. "Assuredly Religion was no nebulous abstraction to him. He consistently emphasized his own belief in what he called the Eternal Truths; in an Omnipotent, Omnipresent, and All-Loving God, who has revealed Himself through the human attribute of the highest self-sacrificing love; in the freedom of the human will; and in the immortality of the soul. But he asserted that 'Nothing worthy proving can be proven' and that even as to the great laws which are the basis of Science, 'We have but faith, we cannot know.' He dreaded the dogmatism of sects and rash definitions of God. 'I dare hardly name His Name,' he would say, and accordingly he named Him in 'The Ancient Sage' the 'Nameless.' 'But take away belief in the self-conscious personality of God,' he said, 'and you take away the backbone of the world.' 'On God and God-like men we build our trust.' A week before his death I was sitting by him, and he talked long of the Personality and of the Love of God, 'That God, whose eyes consider the poor,' 'Who catereth, even for the sparrow.' 'I should,' he said, 'infinitely rather feel myself the most miserable wretch on

the face of the earth with a God above, than the highest type of man standing alone.' "[1]

Tennyson is acknowledged to be one of the greatest of the Victorian Poets and his name will be immortal.

G. K. Chesterton has critical things to say in his estimate of him but he recognizes his supreme power and place. He admits that Tennyson has "a great deal to say," but thinks that "he had much more power of expression than was wanted for anything he had to express." "He could not think up to the height of his own towering style," he affirms. Nevertheless, he goes on to state: "Whatever else Tennyson was, he was a great poet; no mind that feels itself free, that is, above the ebb and flow of fashion, can feel anything but contempt for the later effort to discredit him in that respect. It is true that, like Browning and almost every other Victorian poet, he was really two poets." He explains that one of them was like Stevenson and the other like "their common master, Virgil," and then he adds, "He was first and last a lyric poet."[2]

Another eminent critic—Clement Shorter—pays homage to Tennyson's poetic gifts. He speaks of his "exquisite purity of style," and adds, "Music there is also in abundance."[3]

[1] *Old Familiar Faces*, by Theodore Watts-Dunton, pp. 146, 147 (Herbert Jenkins, Ltd.).

[2] *The Victorian Age in Literature*, by G. K. Chesterton, pp. 165, 166 (Williams & Norgate).

[3] *Victorian Literature*, by Clement Shorter, p. 10.

For proof of this we have but to think of the "Early Sonnets," the "English Idylls," "Enoch Arden," "The Window," "Maud," and the "Idylls of the King."

Tennyson's *In Memoriam* is an undying proof of the culture Christianity inspires. Who can ever forget their first study of the haunting and beautiful lines? F. W. Robertson of Brighton lectured about the poet and the poem and published an analysis of the poem which he dedicated to Tennyson. Robertson's description and explanation are fine and true.

"The poem entitled 'In Memoriam' is a monument erected by friendship to the memory of a gifted son of the historian Hallam. It is divided into a number of cabinet-like compartments, which, with fine and delicate shades of difference, exhibit the various phases through which the bereaved spirit passes from the first shock of despair, dull, hopeless misery and rebellion, up to the dawn of hope, acquiescent trust, and even calm happiness again. In the meanwhile many a question has been solved, which can only suggest itself when suffering forces the soul to front the realities of our mysterious existence; such as: Is there indeed a life to come? And, if there is, will it be a conscious life? Shall I know that myself? Will there be mutual recognition? continuance of attachments? Shall friend meet friend, and brother brother, as friends and brothers? Or again: How comes it that one so gifted was taken away so early, in the maturity of his powers, just at the moment when

they seemed about to become available to mankind? What means all this, and is there not something wrong? Is the law of Creation Love indeed? . . .

"By slow degrees, all these doubts, and worse, are answered; not as a philosopher would answer them, nor as a theologian, or a metaphysician, but as it is the duty of a poet to reply, by intuitive faculty, in strains in which Imagination predominates over Thought and Memory. And one of the manifold beauties of this exquisite poem, and which is another characteristic of true Poetry, is that, piercing through all the sophistries and over-refinements of speculation, and the lifeless scepticism of science, it falls back upon the grand, primary, simple truths of our Humanity; those first principles which underlie all creeds, which belong to our earliest childhood, and on which the wisest and best have relied through all ages; that all is right; that darkness shall be clear; that God and Time are the only interpreters; that Love is king; that the Immortal is in us; that—which is the keynote of the whole—

> "All is well, though Faith and Form
> Be sundered in the night of fear."[1]

Arthur Hallam died in September, 1833, while staying with his father at an hotel in Vienna. He had seemed in perfect health, but, lying down on a sofa, within a few minutes he had passed away. A rupture of a blood-vessel on the brain was the

[1] *Analysis of Tennyson's 'In Memoriam,'* by Rev. F. W. Robertson. Preface. (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd.).

cause. On examination afterwards the doctors declared that he could not have lived long.

Tennyson was not alone in his affection and admiration for his friend. He "captivated" many others. Thirlwall, a fellow-student, who afterwards became a great bishop, said: "He is the only man here of my own standing before whom I bow in conscious inferiority in everything." Another says: "Hallam was a man of wonderful mind and knowledge on all subjects, hardly credible at his age. . . . . I long ago set him down for the most wonderful person I ever knew. He was of the most tender, affectionate disposition."[1]

The poem was born in the grief of Hallam's death and in the religious problems his death excited in Tennyson's mind. Some of the lines and cantos are unforgettable, even as the argument is persuasive and consoling. No matter how familiar we may be with them we are ever conscious of their truth of thought and their extraordinary beauty of diction.

We may be permitted to briefly quote.

"When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
And home to Mary's house returned,
Was this demanded—if he yearn'd
To hear her weeping by his grave?

"Behold a man raised up by Christ!
The rest remaineth unreveal'd;
He told it not; or something seal'd
The lips of that Evangelist.

"Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,
Nor other thought her mind admits,
But, he was dead, and there he sits,
And He that brought him back is there.

[1] *Old Familiar Faces*, p. 150.

'All subtle thought, all curious fears,
Borne down by gladness so complete,
She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet
With costly spikenard and with tears.

* * * * * * * * * * *

"My own dim life should teach me this,
That life shall live for evermore,
Else earth is darkness at the core,
And dust and ashes all that is;

"And so the Word had breath, and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds,
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought;

"Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

"That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroy'd,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete.

* * * * * * * * * * *

"Ring in the valiant man and free;
The larger heart, the kindlier hand:
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

* * * * * * * * * * *

"No longer half-akin to brute,
For all we thought and loved and did,
And hoped, and suffer'd is but seed
Of what in them is flower and fruit:

"Whereof the man, that with me trod
This planet, was a noble type
Appearing ere the times were ripe,
That friend of mine who lives in God,

"That God, which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves."

We can imagine the sensation its publication would make remembering the time and the crisis of thought through which Christianity and Science were passing. A. C. Benson well says: "The volume was warmly welcomed by teachers such as Maurice and Robertson, who were still trying to harmonize the exact utterances of revelation with progressive science; scientific men such as Tyndall, whose natural bias was strongly religious and emotional, were still more delighted to welcome one who showed that the spirit of science was alien neither to poetry nor to religious emotion. Bishop Westcott felt on reading the poem that 'the hope of man lay in the historic realization of the Gospel,' and was frankly moved by the author's 'splendid faith, in the face of the frankest acknowledgment of every difficulty, in the growing purpose of the sum of life, and in the noble destiny of the individual man.'"[1]

What Bishop Westcott felt, thousands have felt. The Saviour and Lord of men, who is the Resurrection and the Life, has had no more devout and believing disciple than Alfred Tennyson.

[1] *Tennyson*, by A. C. Benson, p. 32 (Methuen & Co., Ltd.).

CHAPTER VIII.

Christianity and Poetry.

(Continued).

WE always think of Tennyson and Browning together. They were together in Stopford Brooke's mind when he wrote: "Alfred Tennyson and Robert Browning (whose wife will justly share his fame) began to write between 1830 and 1833, and continued their work side by side for fifty years, when they died, almost together. Both of them were wholly original, and both of them, differing at every point of their art, kept with extraordinary vitality their main powers, and were capable of fresh inventions even to the very last. They passed through a long period of change and development, during which all the existing foundations of faith and knowledge and art were dug out, investigated, tested, and an attempt made to reconstruct them. . . . . Their love of beauty and of their art was unbroken . . . . . great poets who have illumined, impelled, adorned, and exalted the world in which we live."[1]

[1] *English Literature*, by Stopford A. Brooke, p. 165 (Macmillan & Co., Ltd.).

We recall our first acquaintance with Browning. It was in a selection of his poems. It came just at the psychological moment. We were on probation and only twenty-one years of age. What a revelation the poems were! What an education they were in thought and language and faith! Many of the poems and many of the lines were indelibly impressed on the memory. Again and again through all the years we have turned to them with increasing wonderment and sympathy and gratitude.

When Henry Drummond set off on his voyage to Australia to visit the colleges in the different states, he took a complete set of Browning's works with him, and these he pondered while enjoying the leisure of the sea.

It was inevitable that the critics should have much to say about Browning, not only in relation to the subject matter of his poems but in regard to their style and diction. G. K. Chesterton is very trenchant and we think true. That Browning was either an "anarchist" or a "mystagogue" he dismisses summarily, and then proceeds to say: "The two chief charges against him were a contempt for form unworthy of an artist, and a poor pride in obscurity. The obscurity is true, though not, I think, the pride in it; but the truth about this charge rather rises out of the truth about the other. The other charge is true. Browning cared very much for form; he cared very much for style. You may not happen to like his style; but he did. . . . . Almost every

poem of Browning, especially the shortest and most successful ones, was moulded or graven in some special style, generally grotesque, but invariably deliberate. In most cases whenever he wrote a new song he wrote a new kind of song. The new lyric is not only of a different metre, but of a different shape. . . . . The obscurity, to which he must in a large degree plead guilty, was, curiously enough, the result rather of the gay artist in him than the deep thinker. . . . He wanted to say something comic and energetic and he wanted to say it quick. And, between his artistic skill in the fantastic and his temperamental turn for the abrupt, the idea sometimes flashed past unseen. But it is quite an error to suppose that these are the dark mines containing his treasure. The two or three great and true things he really had to say he generally managed to say quite simply."[1]

Coulson Kernahan is very illuminative in his chapter on " One Aspect of Browning." " Tennyson holds the magic glass which makes the near things of this world beautiful, and so, too, does Browning. But Browning does more than this : he offers us the telescope which brings the great things of far-off worlds near. ' Fundamental brainwork '—to use a phrase of Rossetti's—is to be seen in all he attempts, though, at the setting-out, one expects nothing more serious than some gossip of studio or club. Like a poetic Socrates in a frock-coat and silk hat, he takes you, as it were, by the

[1] *The Victorian Age in Literature*, by G. K. Chesterton, pp. 169-173 (Williams & Norgate).

button-hole, and starting off with a colloquial 'Between you and me' that puts one off one's guard, he suddenly springs upon the unwary auditor some question that probes life to the quick. . . It is not a matter for wonder that Browning should not be popular. The reasons are many. One is that he is a poet for men and women rather than for lads and maidens. . . . . Another reason why so few care to go abroad in the company of Browning is that he is a difficult companion with whom to keep step. He plays tricks—trips you up with forced rhyme, against which you stub your foot. . . . . You suspect, as you lie sprawling, that your companion is laughing at you, but, when you are again on your feet and take his arm, he seems never in his life to have been more serious. . . . ."[1]

The most obvious thing in Browning was his knowledge of the souls of men. Chesterton was conscious of that. He says: "He concentrated on the special souls of men; seeking God in a series of private interviews."[2]

The proofs of this are everywhere. Take this from *Christina*.

> "Never fear but there's provision
> Of the devil's to quench knowledge, lest we walk the earth in rapture!
> —Making those who catch God's secret, just so much more prize their capture!"

Or this from *A Light Woman*:

> "'Tis an awkward thing to play with souls,
> And matter enough to save one's own."

[1] *Wise Men and a Fool*, by Coulson Kernahan, pp. 122-124 (Ward, Lock & Co., Ltd.). [2] *The Victorian Age in Literature*, p. 41.

And this from *Gold Hair :*

> " Evil or good may be better or worse
> In the human heart, but the mixture of each
> Is a marvel and a curse."

His moral earnestness is inescapable. The awful seriousness of life was never absent from his consciousness. Great words and lines and queries spring out upon the reader. Some of them take the breath away when first seen. This, for example, from *The Flight of the Duchess* :

> " What's a man's age ? He must hurry more, that's all ;
> Cram in a day, what his youth took a year to hold ;
> When we mind labour, then, only then, we're too old."

This is the supreme ethic of life, the very soul of honour :

> " Thy singleness of soul that made me proud,
> Thy purity of heart I loved aloud,
> Thy man's truth I was bold to bid God see ! "
>
> *Any Wife to Any Husband.*

Here is the true moral valuation :

> " If you loved only what were worth your love,
> Love were clear gain, and wholly well for you.
> Make the low nature better by your throes !
> Give earth yourself, go up for gain above ! "
>
> Song from *James Lee.*

This is the appeal to the noblest :

> " Let a man contend to the uttermost
> For his life's set prize, be it what it will.
> The counter, our lovers staked, was lost
> As surely as if it were lawful coin ;
> And the sin I impute to each frustrate ghost
> Is, the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin."
>
> *The Statue and the Bust.*

And these flashes:

"Take away love, and our earth is a tomb!"

"God uses us to help each other so,
Lending our minds out."

"Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or, what's a heaven for?"

"Incentives come from the soul's self."

"In this world, who can do a thing, will not;
And who would do it, cannot, I perceive;
Yet the will's somewhat—somewhat, too, the power—
And thus we half—men struggle. At the end,
God, I conclude, compensates, punishes."

The ethical and spiritual appeal of this from *A Grammarian's Funeral* cannot be avoided:

"Others mistrust and say, 'But time escapes!
Live now or never!'
He said, 'What's time? Leave Now for dogs and apes!
Man has forever!'

"That low man seeks a little thing to do,
Sees it and does it;
This high man, with a great thing to pursue,
Dies ere he knows it. . . . .

"That, has the world here—should he need the next,
Let the world mind him!
This, throws himself on God, and unperplexed
Seeking shall find Him. . . . .

"This man decided not to Live but Know."

Browning believed in Culture.

"The grapes which dye thy wine, are richer far
Through culture, than the wild wealth of the rock;
The suave plum than the savage-tasted drupe;
The pastured honey-bee drops choicer sweet;
The flowers turn double, and the leaves turn flowers;
That young and tender crescent moon, thy slave,
Sleeping upon her robe as if on clouds
Refines upon the women of my youth.
What, and the soul alone deteriorate?"—*Cleon*.

The best in men is aroused by thoughts like these :

> " Man might live at first
> The animal life ; but is there nothing more ?
> In due time, let him critically learn
> How he lives ; and, the more he gets to know
> Of his own life's adaptabilities,
> The more joy-giving will his life become.
>
> * * * * * * * * * * * * *
>
> That there's a world of capability
> For joy spread round about us, meant for us,
> Inviting us ; and still the soul craves all.
>
> * * * * * * * * * * * * *
>
> And so a man can use but a man's joy
> While he sees God's."—*Cleon.*

And this :

> 'Tis not what man does which exalts him, but what man
> Would do ! "

Dr. John A. Hutton, in his invaluable little book on " Guidance from Robert Browning in Matters of Faith " gathers up the teaching under four heads : The Case for Belief, The Soul's Leap to God, The Mystery of Evil, and The Incarnation.

Browning was familiar with the problems which arise in the minds of men. He was not obscurantist. " Faith must be aware of all the difficulties," and it is certain that Browning was. His faith in God comes out triumphantly. " Lord ! I believe. Help Thou mine unbelief ! " was his constant cry. He knew the godliness of faith, the humanness of doubt, and his heart was one continuous prayer

for trust and the peace it brings. How grandly his faith rings out in *Abt Vogler:*

"Therefore to whom turn I but to Thee, the ineffable Name?
Builder and maker, Thou, of houses not made with hands!
What, have fear of change from Thee who art ever the same?
Doubt that Thy power can fill the heart that Thy power expands?

"There shall never be one lost good! What was, shall live as before;
The evil is null, is nought, is silence implying sound;
What was good, shall be good, with, for evil, so much good more;
On the earth the broken arc; in the heaven, a perfect round.

"All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good, shall exist;
Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor good, nor power,
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist,
When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.
The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;
Enough that he heard it once; he shall hear it by-and-by.

"And what is our failure here but a triumph's evidence
For the fulness of the days? Have we withered or agonized?
Why else was the pause prolonged but that singing might issue thence?
Why rushed the discords in, but that harmony should be prized?
Sorrow is hard to bear, and doubt is slow to clear,
Each sufferer says his say, his scheme of the weal and woe;
But God has a few of us whom He whispers in the ear;
The rest may reason and welcome; 'tis we musicians know."

The beauty and power of this from *An Epistle* are evident:

"So, the All-Great, were the All-Loving too—
So, through the thunder comes a human voice,
Saying, 'O heart I made, a heart beats here!
Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself!
Thou hast no power nor may'st conceive of mine:
But love I gave thee, with myself to love,
And thou must love me who have died for thee!'"

Nothing can destroy his faith in the Goodness of God:

"How good is man's life, the mere living! how fit to employ
All the heart and the soul and the senses for ever in joy!

Didst thou kiss the thin hands of thy mother, held up as men sung
The low song of the nearly departed, and hear her faint tongue,
Joining in while it could to the witness, 'Let one more attest,
I have lived, seen God's hand thro' a lifetime, and all was for best!'"—*Saul.*

And this:

"Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life for which the first was made,
Our times are in His hand
Who saith, 'A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God; see all, nor be afraid!'"
Rabbi Ben Ezra.

"God, Thou art Love! I build my faith on that," he makes Festus cry in *Paracelsus*.

There was something beyond and above Nature:

"I spoke as I saw,
Reported, as man may of God's work—all's love, yet all's law."
Saul.

And everything centres in Christ:

"'Tis the weakness in strength, that I cry for! my flesh that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by, for ever; a Hand like this hand,
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand!"

And this from the *Epilogue*:

"That one Face, far from vanish, rather grows,
Or decomposes but to recompose,
Becomes my universe that feels and knows!"

No Gospel evangelist believed in Conversion more thoroughly than Robert Browning. Walter Bagehot called conscience "the *converting* intuition," and Browning knew all the dark, subtle, terrific, transforming things of conscience. Dr. Hutton says: "I regard Browning's teaching on Conversion as his supreme message to our time. It is that teaching, as it seems to me, which ranks him with the prophets. Valuable as is the light which he sheds upon those problems of life and experience which are as old as man . . . . . yet more solitary and distinguished is his teaching on the soul of man, his impassioned confidence that the soul may, in one grand moment, leap sheer out of any depth of shame and subtle bondage, and leap to the breast of God."[1]

Conversion is the chief theme in "Pippa Passes," "Ned Bratts," "The Ring and the Book," and "A Death in the Desert."

This is the story of "Ned Bratts," as told by Dr. Hutton.

"On a hot midsummer's day, their lordships were conducting the Special Assizes in Bedford Courthouse. Business was proceeding, when old Ned Bratts and his wife, hand-in-hand, tumbled up the passage until they reached the platform. Then they turned round and faced the assembled people. They pleaded with the judges—in God's name—to let them speak out. And this was what they said. They had just come from Bedford jail,

[1] *Guidance from Robert Browning in Matters of Faith*, by John A. Hutton, D.D., p. 49 (Oliphants, Ltd.).

where they had met John Bunyan. . . . . He had taken down 'the blessed book' and had read out of it about God, and Christ, and Heaven; about Love and Pity and Forgiveness. And God's eye had settled upon them—man and wife. And now they felt that they must empty their souls of all their sins, and drag out to the light all their hidden iniquities so that God and the daylight might burn them up. In that open court, in the full light of day, they poured out their souls, those two, the one helping the other not to forget even one foul spot. . . . . At last they were done; and now they besought the judges to condemn them quick to death. And Ned Bratts and his wife passed swiftly out of life singing and making melody in their hearts unto God."[1]

Browning's faith was focussed in the Incarnation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is heard in "Christmas Eve," "Saul," "A Death in the Desert," "The Ring and the Book," "Ferishtah's Fancies," and in "Blougram's Apology."

"This good God—what He could do if He would,
Would if He could—then must have done long since.
If so, when, where, and how? Some way must be—
Once feel about and soon or late you hit
Some sense in which it might be after all,
Why not, 'The Way, The Truth, The Life?'

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

"Once own the use of faith, I'll find your faith;
We're back on Christian ground."—*Blougram's Apology.*

[1] *Guidance from Robert Browning in Matters of Faith*, p. 65.

Thinking of Robert Browning we think of the wonderful woman who lived by his side and fulfilled her poetic ambition even as he fulfilled his. Just as he has an unrivalled place in Christian culture so she has an unchallenged status. Coulson Kernahan pays this high tribute to her. "Of the women poets who lived and died in the Nineteenth Century, only three great names occur to me—Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Christina Rossetti, and Emily Brontë. In an imagined Parliament of Poets, would not the first of these sit as the representative of her sex? In an imagined (and unimaginable) Parliament of Women, she would have equal right to be chosen as the representative of poetry."[1]

G. K. Chesterton is equally emphatic as to her greatness. "Elizabeth Barrett had a strength really rare among women poets; the strength of the phrase. She excelled in her sex, in epigram, almost as much as Voltaire in his. . . . . She is by far the most European of all the English poets of that age."[2]

John Greenleaf Whittier lives in the love of the world because he was a great Christian and a true poet. Charles Kingsley called him "The Poet Saint of America." Another averred: "A life is in his written page; these are the chants of a soldier and anon the hymnal of a saint." In a letter Whittier confesses his faith: "I love practical Christianity, the true following of the

[1] *Wise Men and a Fool*, p. 204.

[2] *The Victorian Age in Literature*, pp. 177, 178 (Williams & Norgate).

Master. I am weary of creeds and forms." His poems are full of tenderness and sympathy, yet vigorous and strong, and buoyant with an optimism which only the Christian faith can give. His humanitarian poems, especially those dealing with slavery and the freedom of the slaves, are permeated with the purest Christian feeling. His poem : " Our Master," is beloved by multitudes.

" Immortal Love, forever full,
Forever flowing free,
Forever shared, forever whole,
A never-ebbing sea !

" The letter fails, and systems fall,
And every symbol wanes ;
The Spirit over-brooding all
Eternal Love remains.

" In joy of inward peace, or sense
Of sorrow over sin,
He is His own best evidence,
His witness is within.

" Thou judgest us ; Thy purity
Doth all our lusts condemn ;
The love that draws us nearer Thee
Is hot with wrath to them.

" Thy healing pains, a keen distress
Thy tender light shines in ;
Thy sweetness is the bitterness,
Thy grace the pang of sin.

" Who hates, hates Thee, who loves becomes
Therein to Thee allied ;
All sweet accords of hearts and homes
In Thee are multiplied.

"So, to our mortal eyes subdued,
Flesh-veiled, but not concealed,
We know in Thee the Fatherhood
And heart of God revealed.

'Alone, O Love ineffable!
Thy saving name is given;
To turn aside from Thee is hell,
To walk with Thee is heaven."

James Russell Lowell is another shining illustration. Of his culture there cannot be doubt; of his true Christian experience there are abundant proofs. For five years he represented the American Republic in London and made a great impression by his skill in diplomacy, the brilliance of his speeches and the charm of his social manner. "I would rather be loved," once he said, "than anything else in the world." W. T. Stead was an enthusiastic admirer. He described him as one of the prophets of the Nineteenth Century and confessed: "In some of the critical moments of my life I found in Lowell helps such as I found in none other outside Carlyle's *Cromwell* and in Holy Writ."

Lowell was the prophet of Peace, Freedom, Progress, Truth, Duty, and of Practical Christianity. Even the *Biglow Papers* are saturated with Christian thoughts and emotions. There is nothing in literature like them, with their Yankee idioms, their apposite political allusions, their drawls and drolleries, their swinging rhythm and sarcasms and sneers.

Three poems of his will live for ever in the love of the Christian world: "A Parable," "The Search," and "The Vision of Sir Launfal." The

latter was "dashed off in a kind of inspired ecstasy of forty-eight hours." Mr. Stead was enraptured with it. "The Poem," he said, "is a great Christian parable which should be read once a year in all the churches."

Sir Launfal, a knight of the North country, sets off to find the Holy Grail. The legend is that the cup from which our Lord drank at the Last Supper belonged to Joseph of Arimathea. It had been brought to Europe but was lost through the impurity of one of its custodians. Hence gallant Christian knights had ever been on the quest. The night before Sir Launfal sets off, he dreams. He sees himself in his coat of mail issuing from his castle. A leper crouches at the gate "who begged with his hand and moaned as he sate." Sir Launfal, sickened at the sight, throws him a piece of gold. In his dream the years roll by. Old and grey he returns unsuccessful in his search and finds his heir reigning in his stead. Turning away from his gate, sick at heart, he sits amid the snow. Then, behold, he hears the same leper's voice: "For Christ's sweet sake, I beg an alms." He looks at the leper, and thus the poem proceeds:

> "And Sir Launfal said: 'I behold in thee
> An image of Him who died on the tree;
> Thou also hast had thy crown of thorns—
> Thou also hast had the world's buffets and scorns—
> And to thy life were not denied
> The wounds in the hands and feet and side;
> Mild Mary's Son, acknowledge me;
> Behold, through him, I give to Thee.'"

He gave the leper to eat and drink, and then a startling transformation takes place.

"As Sir Launfal mused with a downcast face,
A light shone round about the place;
The leper no longer crouched at his side,
But stood before him glorified.
Shining and tall and fair and straight
As the pillar that stood by the Beautiful Gate—
Himself the Gate whereby men can
Enter the temple of God in man.
And the voice that was calmer than silence said;
'Lo, it is I. Be not afraid!
In many climes without avail
Thou hast spent thy life for the Holy Grail.
Behold, it is here—this cup which thou
Didst fill at the streamlet for Me but now;
This crust is My body broken for thee,
This water His blood that died on the tree;
The Holy Supper is kept, indeed,
In whatso we share with another's need;
Not what we give, but what we share—
For the gift without the giver is bare;
Who gives himself with his alms feeds three—
Himself, his hungering neighbour, and Me!'"

Dora Greenwell must be mentioned. "The last of the Mystics," she has been called. Sir William Robertson Nicoll declared that "the most suggestive writings on the Atonement were the works of Dora Greenwell." A writer in the *Atheneum* described her as a kind of Florence Nightingale, walking the hospital of ailing souls. She could enter the chamber of the human heart "with words of comfort and looks of love."

Her Prose volumes, "The Patience of Hope" and "A Present Heaven," are treasured alike by lovers of literature and lovers of Christ. When the American edition of "The Patience of Hope" was published, Whittier wrote the Introduction. He praises its literary qualities, "the singular beauty of its style and the strong, steady march of its argument."

"Two Friends," "Carmina Crucis," "Colloquia Crucis" (a sequel to "Two Friends"), "A Basket of Summer Fruit," "The Soul's Legend," and "Camera Obscura," are the titles of her principal works. The device which is the frontispiece of "Carmina Crucis" revealed the faith of her heart. It is a hand, grasping a Cross, with the Latin motto: "I hold and I am held." Her insight into the mysteries of Christ are surely the teachings of the Spirit of God.

She was a Protestant Prophetess. Could anything be simpler and lovelier than this?

A Sinner and his Saviour.

"Oh! who are these, too long apart,
When once they've found each other's heart
Would never from the other part?
A Sinner and his Saviour.

"A sinner I; but who art Thou
With many crowns upon Thy brow?
I see the thorn among them now
I know Thee for my Saviour.

* * * * * * * * * * * *

"I saw Thee sweetly condescend
Of humble men to be the Friend;
I chose Thee for my way—my end,
But found not yet my Saviour.

"Until upon the Cross I saw
My God, who died to meet the law
That man had broken; then I saw
My sin, and then my Saviour.

"What seek I longer? let me be
A sinner all my days to Thee
Yet more and more—and Thou to me
Yet more and more my Saviour.

* * * * * * * * * * * *

"Be Thou to me my Lord, my guide,
My friend, yea, everything beside;
But first, last, best, whate'er betide,
Be Thou to me my Saviour."

Many more than Methodists love "The Pitman to his wife" and "The Wife's Answer." Mr. George Parkinson of Sherburn, reverently remembered among the miners and the Methodists in the County of Durham, tells how these came to be written. The Wesleyans were having a bazaar in connection with the chapel. Mr. T. C. Thompson, of Sherburn Hall, brought his guests with him to the opening ceremony. One lady got into conversation with Mr. Parkinson and, of course, the talk was about the grace of God and the wonders of redemption. He had pointed to a man, once a drunkard and a gambler, who had been changed and was now radiant with the love of Christ. Afterwards Mr. Thompson informed Mr. Parkinson that the lady was Miss Greenwell. Some weeks later Mr. Parkinson received from her twenty-five copies of these poems.

This is how the Pitman begins:

"Sit ye down on the settle, here by me, I've got something to say to thee, wife;
I want to be a new sort of man, and to lead a new sort of life;
There's but little pleasure and little gain in spending the days I spend,
Just to work like a horse all the days of my life, and to die like a dog at the end."

And this is how the wife begins her answer:

"I've listened, Geordie, to all thou's said, and now that thou's had thy say,
I can but tell thee it's far the best of my hearing this many a day;
Though many a look thou's given to me, and many a word thou's said,
I was pleased enough to get and to hear both before and since we were wed."[1]

[1] *Everlasting Love*, by Dora Greenwell (H. R. Allenson, Ltd.).

She gets to the deeps of things in *Carmina Crucis*. She states the awful doubts which the facts of sin suggest.

"On earth is hate and discord, and we say these things are but for a day, but if for a day, why not for ever?

"If light reigned, would it endure the darkness even for a moment?

"And if love is vanquished now, why should we deem that it will triumph hereafter?"

The anguished heart wants rest.

"Thus all things ask for rest,
A home above, a home beneath the sod;
The sun will seek the west,
The bird will seek its nest,
The heart another breast
Whereon to lean, the spirit seeks its God."

Now the soul is at the Cross.

"I say not to Thee now,
'Come from the Cross, and then will I believe.'
Oh, lift me up to Thee, and teach me how
To love and how to grieve.

"Stay on the cross, until
Thou art of all confess'd, of all adored,
Be there each ling'ring heart, each wav'ring will
Made fast unto its Lord.

"I sought Thee 'mid the leaves,
I find Thee on the dry and blasted tree;
I saw Thee not, until I saw the thieves
There crucified with Thee."

A great prayer surges up.

"Thou hast given me a heart to desire,
Thou hast given me a soul to aspire,
A spirit to question and plead;
I ask not what Thou hast decreed;
I think but of love and of need;
Thou art rich, Thou art kind, Thou art free;
What joy shall be failing to me
Whom Thou lovest? Thy smile and Thy kiss
Can give me back all that I miss,
In Thy presence is fulness of bliss;
I ask not its nature! I know
It is life, it is youth, it is love,
It is all that is wanting below,
It is all that is waiting above."

She was the poetess of love and pity, a minstrel of the domestic joys and sorrows and a lyrical idealist. She knew the rapture of oneness with God.

"And art Thou come with us to dwell,
Our Prince, our Guide, our Love, our Lord?
And is Thy name Emmanuel,
God present with His world restored?

* * * * * * * * * * *

"The world is glad for Thee! the heart
Is glad for Thee! and all is well,
And fixed, and sure, because THOU ART
Whose name is called Emmanuel." [1]

Christina Rossetti belongs to these elect souls at once Christian and cultured. She passionately loved her gifted brother Gabriel and yet how different she was to him! A wonderful tribute was paid to her by Algernon Charles Swinburne. We are indebted for this to Mr. Coulson Kernahan who tells the story in *In Good Company*. He says:

"On one occasion I happened, half-way through lunch, to mention that I had in my pocket a copy

[1] *Carmina Crucis*, by Dora Greenwell, pp. 132, 134 (H. R. Allenson, Ltd.).

of Christina Rossetti's latest poem, written in memory of the Duke of Clarence, and entitled *The Death of a Firstborn.*

"Down went knife and fork as he half rose from his chair to stretch a hand across the table for the manuscript.

"'She is as a god to mortals when compared to most other living women poets,' he exclaimed in a burst of Swinburnian hyperbole.

"Then in his thin, high-pitched but exquisitely modulated and musical voice he half read, half chanted two verses of the poem in question;

> One young life lost, two happy young lives blighted
> With earthward eyes we see;
> With eyes uplifted, keener, farther-sighted
> We look, O Lord, to Thee.
>
> Grief hears a funeral knell; Hope hears the ringing
> Of birthday bells on high;
> Faith, Hope and Love make answer with soft singing
> Half carol and half cry.

"Then he stopped abruptly.

"'I won't read the third and last verse,' he said. 'One glance at it is sufficient to show that it is unequal, and that the poem would be stronger and finer by its omission. But for the happy folk who are able to think as she thinks, who believe as she believes on religious matters, the poem is of its kind perfect. Let me read that second verse again,' and with glowing eyes, with hand marking time to the music, he read once more:

> Grief hears a funeral knell; Hope hears the ringing
> Of birthday bells on high;
> Faith, Hope and Love make answer with soft singing,
> Half carol and half cry.

"The last line, 'Half carol and half cry,' he repeated three times, lowering his voice with each repetition, until at last it was little more than a whisper, and so died away, like the undistinguishable ceasing of far-off music.

"Laying the manuscript reverently beside him, he sat perfectly still for a space and with brooding beautiful eyes. Then, rising without a word he stole, silently, softly, almost ghost-like, but with short, swift steps out of the room."[1]

In one of her hymns we see how she adored and loved the Lord.

"None other Lamb, none other Name,
None other hope in heaven or earth or sea,
None other hiding-place from guilt and shame,
None beside Thee.

"My faith burns low, my hope burns low,
Only my heart's desire cries out in me
By the deep thunder of its want and woe,
Cries out to Thee.

"Lord, Thou art life, though I be dead;
Love's fire Thou art, however cold I be;
Nor heaven have I, nor place to lay my head,
Nor home, but Thee."

There are certain poems which have taken the highest rank as literature which owe their spell entirely to Christ. Frederic W. H. Myers' *Saint Paul* is the first of which we think. Published in 1867 it has been repeatedly reprinted and its power abides. No biblical scholar has been able to interpret Paul the Apostle as the poet does in this great poem.

[1] *In Good Company*, by Coulson Kernahan, pp. 6-8 (John Lane, The Bodley Head).

' Christ ! I am Christ's and let the name suffice you,
Ay, for me too He greatly hath sufficed ;
Lo, with no winning words I would entice you,
Paul has no honour and no friend but Christ.

" Yes, without cheer of sister or of daughter,
Yes, without stay of father or of son,
Lone on the land and homeless on the water
Pass I in patience till the work be done.

" Yet not in solitude if Christ anear me
Waketh him workers for the great employ,
Oh not in solitude if souls that hear me
Catch from my joyaunce the surprise of joy.

* * * * * * * * * * *

" Oh to have watched thee thro' the vineyards wander,
Pluck the ripe ears, and into evening roam !
Followed, and known that in the twilight yonder
Legions of angels shone about thy home !

* * * * * * * * * * *

" Ah with what bitter triumph had I seen them,
Drops of redemption bleeding from thy brow !
Thieves, and a culprit crucified between them,
All men forsaking him—and that was thou !

* * * * * * * * * * *

" Only like souls I see the folk thereunder,
Bound who should conquer, slaves who should be kings—
Hearing their one hope with an empty wonder,
Sadly contented in a show of things :

" Then with a rush the intolerable craving
Shivers throughout me like a trumpet-call—
Oh to save these ! to perish for their saving,
Die for their life, be offered for them all !

* * * * * * * * * * *

" Ay, for this Paul, a scorn and a despising,
Weak as you know him and the wretch you see—
Even in these eyes shall ye behold him rising,
Strength in infirmities and Christ in me.

* * * * * * * * * * *

" Oh could I tell ye surely would believe it !
Oh could I only say what I have seen !
How should I tell or how can ye receive it,
How, till he bringeth you where I have been ?

* * * * * * * * * * *

'Quick in a moment, infinite for ever,
Send an arousal better than I pray,
Give me a grace upon the faint endeavour,
Souls for my hire and Pentecost to-day!

* * * * * * * * * * *

Yea thro' life, death, thro' sorrow and thro' sinning,
He shall suffice me, for he hath sufficed;
Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning,
Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ.'" [1]

From Professor George Jackson's *A Young Man's Bookshelf*, we learn that the J. E. B., to whom the poem is dedicated, was Mrs. Josephine Butler, and that in the earlier editions these words (in Greek) were added: "To whom I owe my own soul." Dora Greenwell's *The Patience of Hope* was also dedicated to the same devoted woman.

Much has been written about Francis Thompson and *The Hound of Heaven*. In his poverty he had slept on the Thames Embankment and wandered friendless about Charing Cross. After his death, among his papers, the glorious poem was found.

John Masefield's *The Everlasting Mercy* is the story of a catastrophic conversion. The heart almost stands still when first the burning lines are read. The poet has insight into the very soul of the poacher and reprobate, Saul Kane. We see vice at close quarters. Then we see the redeeming angel. Finally Saul Kane is converted. We wish we could quote at length, but the poem needs to be read from beginning to end and again and again.

We hold a pathetic proof of all this in our hands. It is *For Remembrance*, the volume edited by A. St.

[1] *Saint Paul*, by F. W. H. Myers (Macmillan & Co., Ltd.).

John Adcock, of soldier-poets who fell in the War. There were forty-four of them. In this heroic and honoured company are Rupert Brooke, Leslie Coulson, Gerald William Grenfell, Francis Ledwidge, Colwyn E. A. Philipps, and E. Wyndham Tennant. *For Remembrance* gives us brief sketches of the brief lives of these soldiers who were also poets. It is a galaxy not only of the gallant and unselfish but of the cultured and the Christian. Just two little things we can quote. Here is the letter Colwyn Philipps wrote to his mother just before her death, and also just before his own death.

"This is not a letter, it's a testimonial. I give you a character of twenty-six years. You have never advised me to do anything because it seemed wise unless it was the highest right. Single-minded, you have chosen love and honour as the 'things that are more excellent,' and you have not failed. . . . . You are to me the dearest friend, the perfect companion, the shining example, and the proof that honour and love are above all things and are possible of attainment."

And this from his poem *Attainment.*

"When you have grasped the highest rung,
When the last hymn of praise is sung,
When all around you thousands bow,
When Fame with laurel binds your brow,
When you have reached the utmost goal
That you have set your hurrying soul . . . . .
Then you shall see the whole thing small
Beside the one gift worth it all;
The one good thing from pole to pole
Is called Simplicity of Soul." [1]

[1] *For Remembrance*, by A. St. John Adcock, pp. 66, 67 (Hodder & Stoughton).

Many other names could have been mentioned, not to prove but rather to illustrate our thesis. Christianity, and all that we mean by Christianity, has been expounded in poetry. The most beautiful cultures in poetic forms owe everything to Christ.

We have just seen *The Poets' Life of Christ*, by Norman Ault. Here is a glorious confirmation and a most beauteous and complete amplification of all that we have been trying to say. In *The Poets' Life of Christ* we see how central is the place of our Lord in the poetry of the world. This anthology covers "seven centuries of literature." The Author explains the purpose he had in view. "My aim has been to reveal the extent to which the life and teaching of Christ have inspired the poets of the English-speaking race—and not least those who are not famed for their specifically religious poetry—as well as to illustrate that wonderful life itself by the poems thus inspired. . . . . The selections, numbering nearly four hundred, are arranged in such an order that the story of Christ's life, including the greater part of His teaching, is followed step by step from the Annunciation to the Ascension; so that they form, not a mere miscellany of Christian poetry, or of poems about Christ, but— . . . . . in a very real sense, a 'Poets' Life of Christ.' . . . . The extent to which the reflective mind of the race has become permeated with ideas ultimately derived from Christ has more and more been brought home to me by the perusal of the works of some two or three hundred poets. . . . My main endeavour

has been to visualize that full humanity which was once seen in Palestine—to recall the Man who could speak with authority to maniac or multitude, but with whom little children could romp and chatter, who was ever Himself, alike amid the Hosannas of the mob and when they clamoured 'Crucify,' to whom the empire of the world was a real temptation, but who chose instead to die for it."[1]

The main divisions are "Born of Mary," "Childhood," "He that should come," "The Sermon on the Mount," "In Galilee," "In Divers Places," "And He taught them," "The Road to Jerusalem," "Gathering Shadows," "Despised and Rejected," "Crucified," and "Not Here, but Risen."

We commend the volume to our readers. Here is the literary proof of the pre-eminence of Christianity in the culture of Poetry.

[1] *The Poets' Life of Christ*, by Norman Ault, Introduction. (Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press).

CHAPTER IX.

Christianity in Hymns.

HYMNOLOGY is an exquisite form of Christian culture. The very existence of hymns, the conditions of their creation, the poetic beauty of hundreds of them, and the purifying and inspirational effect of their recital and rendering prove their value in the culture identified with Christianity. In thousands of hearts and homes the singing of hymns is a continuous means of culture.

Hymns are really the creation of Christianity. Christianity is the singing religion. We have seen that Christianity is truth, the highest truth of God, revealed in the Person and in the ministry of our Lord. When the conceptions of these were vivid in poetic minds, and the realizations were vital in believing hearts, it was inevitable that the truth should be expressed in hymnic form. Jesus and His disciples sang an hymn before they went out to the Mount of Olives and, from that day to this, the disciples of Jesus have been singing hymns. They are, indeed, the purest forms of poetry. A hymn is the poetic setting of a Christian thought designed for Christian worship and praise.

The fact that our hymnic wealth had been enriched by members of all the churches of Christ is a proof of the reality of their culture. There is nothing sectarian or partisan in hymnology. In the writing of hymns the authors are far above the things which divide Christians on earth. They were so near to the truth in their moments of inspiration that they saw the truth in its essence and completeness and universality. The true hymnists have written lines which Christians of all names can sing. That, in itself, is culture. On the wings of hymns they soar to the church which is catholic and to the communion which is all-embracing.

It is wonderful to contemplate the varieties of culture available in hymns. The expression of the worshipful sentiment both by the individual and in the congregation is culture. It is the culture of the soul, the culture of the whole personality, the sway and spell of the spiritual life. How can there be a higher form of culture than that? When men "possess and are possessed" by the Spirit of God and seek to articulate their prayers and praises they are enswathed by the influences of the purest culture.

Praise to God is best expressed in the singing of hymns. We find it difficult to express all our adoration and gratitude but, when we use the hymn of a poet who has articulated our rapture and our awe, we think and feel with him. And that is culture. We are conscious of the truth of this when we sing Dr. Horatius Bonar's lines:

"Fill Thou my life, O Lord my God,
In every part with praise,
That my whole being may proclaim
Thy being and Thy ways.
Not for the lip of praise alone,
Nor e'en the praising heart
I ask, but for a life made up
Of praise in every part.

"Praise in the common words I speak,
Life's common looks and tones;
In intercourse at hearth or board
With my beloved ones.
Not in the temple crowd alone,
Where holy voices chime;
But in the silent paths of earth,
The quiet rooms of time.

'Fill every part of me with praise;
Let all my being speak
Of Thee and of Thy love, O Lord!
Poor though I be and weak.
So shalt Thou, Lord, from me, e'en me,
Receive the glory due,
And so shall I begin on earth
The song for ever new."

This hymn and many others are far above our thought and feeling but we are cultured in the very attempt to make them all our own. Dr. Alexander B. Grosart has well said: "As a Christian I have no objection to sing a hymn that is better than I am, any more than I have objection to the company of a fellow-Christian better than I am, who knows more, feels more, does more than I."[1]

The desire for worship and the feeling of worship are best realized by the singing of hymns. There

[1] *Three Centuries of Hymns*, by Dr. A. B. Grosart. Preface XIX.

is the very highest culture in the meditation of words like these and a whole congregation can be unified in the purest Christian cultures in the singing of the lines. This is Bishop Bickersteth's call to worship:

"Come ye yourselves apart and rest awhile,
Weary, I know it, of the press and throng:
Wipe from your brow the sweat and dust of toil,
And in My quiet strength again be strong.

"Come ye aside from all the world holds dear,
For converse which the world has never known;
Alone with Me and with My Father here,
With Me and with My Father not alone.

"Come, tell Me, all that ye have said and done,
Your victories and failures, hopes and fears,
I know how hardly souls are wooed and won,
My choicest wreaths are always wet with tears.

"Come ye and rest! the journey is too great,
And ye will faint beside the way, and sink;
The bread of life is here for you to eat,
And here for you the wine of love to drink.

"Then, fresh from converse with your Lord, return
And work till daylight soften into even;
The brief hours are not lost in which ye learn
More of your Master and His rest in heaven."

George MacDonald is right when he says: "When we read rejoicingly the true song-speech of one of our singing brethren, we hold song-worship with him and with all who have thus at any time shared in his feelings, even if he have passed centuries ago into the 'high countries' of song."[1]

[1] *England's Antiphon*, Introduction, p. 2 (Macmillan & Co., Ltd.).

Even prayer can be best offered in the beauteous form of hymns. Great souls have breathed their prayers in haunting, believing lines. We feel that they must have felt as we feel and we can take their words as the expression of our pleas and prayers. Dr. George Matheson's prayer-hymn comes to mind. Could there be a culture of the spirit purer than this prayer is?

"Father Divine, I come to Thee,—
I yield, a captive, to Thy sway,
That Love's gold chain may set me free
For all the burden of the day.

'I come not to avoid my care,
I come not to desert the strife;
I come to seek new strength to bear,
I fly to find new power for life.

"Many there be that seek Thy face
To meet the hour of parting breath,
But 'tis for earth I need Thy grace—
Life is more solemn still than death.

"When morning gilds the porch of day,
I feel so vile amid the glow
That I should faint, didst Thou not say,
'I make thee whiter than the snow!'

"When noontide brings its work to all,
I find my task so hard to be,
That I should sink, didst Thou not call,
My strength is perfected in thee!'

"When darkness leads the world to rest,
The silent burden of the night
Would crush, but for Thy message blest,
'At evening time there shall be light!'

"Oh, may these streams of golden light
To all my desert way be given,
Till faith itself is lost in sight,
And days on earth be days of heaven."

The desire for the Holy Spirit's indwelling and guidance can be phrased in many perfect hymns and this is Christian culture. We insist that the devout appropriation of sentiments like this is an education of the soul of the highest order. This is A. H. Vine's lovely prayer.

"O Breath of God, breathe on us now,
And move within us while we pray;
The spring of our new life art Thou,
The very light of our new day.

"Oh strangely art Thou with us, Lord,
Neither in height nor depth to seek;
In nearness shall Thy voice be heard;
Spirit to spirit Thou dost speak.

"Christ is our Advocate on high;
Thou art our Advocate within;
Oh plead the truth, and make reply
To every argument of sin.

"But ah, this faithless heart of mine!
The way I know; I know my Guide;
Forgive me, O my Friend Divine,
That I so often turn aside.

"Be with me when no other friend
The mystery of my heart can share;
And be Thou known, when fears transcend,
By Thy best name of Comforter."

The Christian heart longs for the coming of the Kingdom of Christ, the reign of our Lord in every sphere of human interest and activity. "Thy Kingdom come," we repeatedly pray. The new heaven in the new earth will be here when the Kingdom is established in every heart and home and land We feel this in F. L. Hosmer's hymn.

"Thy kingdom come—on bended knee
The passing ages pray;
And faithful souls have yearned to see
On earth that kingdom's day.

The day in whose clear-shining light
All wrong shall stand revealed,
When justice shall be clothed with might,
And every hurt be healed:

When knowledge hand in hand with peace,
Shall walk the earth abroad—
The day of perfect righteousness,
The promised day of God."

Because a man is a Christian he has a vision of a race of the fully redeemed. James Smetham once said: "A redeemed man is a resplendent thing to meet, in a lane, in a parlour, or anywhere." Imagine a world of redeemed men, when only the flower of Christian culture is to be seen! We think of John Addington Symonds' hymn. We recall the pride Robert Louis Stevenson had in him and their beauteous fellowship. When Stevenson went to Davos Platz he took with him a letter of introduction from Mr. Gosse. In a letter to his mother R. L. S. said: "We got to Davos last evening; and I feel sure we shall like it greatly. I saw Symonds this morning, and already I like him; it is such sport to have a literary man around." Again he wrote: "Beyond its splendid climate, Davos has but one advantage—the neighbourhood of J. A. Symonds. I dare say you know his work, but the man is far more interesting."[1]

[1] *The Life of Robert Louis Stevenson*, by Graham Balfour, p. 129 (Methuen & Co., Ltd.).

"These things shall be! a loftier race
Than e'er the world has known shall rise
With flame of freedom in their souls,
And light of knowledge in their eyes.

"They shall be gentle, brave, and strong,
To spill no drop of blood, but dare
All that may plant man's lordship firm
On earth, and fire, and sea and air.

"New arts shall bloom of loftier mould,
And mightier music thrill the skies,
And every life shall be a song,
When all the earth is paradise."

The hymnists are the true theologians. For the clear and powerful presentation of the great truths of the Christian faith we turn to them. So perfect was their vision and so truly were they inspired that we get our most lucid conceptions of divine things from them. They have taught us the very truth of God. Theologians have written great and learned books about God; they have particularized His attributes and with many words sought to convey something of His omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence, and the infinitude of His moral perfections, but how poor they seem to F. W Faber's lines!

"My God! how wonderful Thou art,
Thy majesty how bright!
How beautiful Thy mercy-seat,
In depths of burning light!

O how I fear Thee, living God!
With deepest, tenderest fears,
And worship Thee with trembling hope,
And penitential tears.

Yet may I love Thee, too, O Lord,
Almighty as Thou art:
For Thou hast stooped to ask of me
The love of my poor heart."

The hymnists had insight into the life and personality of our Lord so that instantly we can enter into the thought of the Redeemer. Bishop Walsham How may be our teacher here.

"Who is this, so weak and helpless,
Child of lowly Hebrew maid,
Rudely in a stable sheltered,
Coldly in a manger laid?
'Tis the Lord of all creation,
Who this wondrous path hath trod,
He is God from everlasting,
And to everlasting God.

"Who is this—a Man of Sorrows,
Walking sadly life's hard way,
Homeless, weary, sighing, weeping
Over sin and Satan's sway?
'Tis our God, our glorious Saviour,
Who above the starry sky
Now for us a place prepareth,
Where no tear can dim the eye."

For the true doctrine of the Holy Spirit we need nothing clearer than Harriet Auber's beauteous hymn. It is interesting to know that she scratched these words on the window pane of her room. After her death the pane disappeared.

"Our blest Redeemer, ere He breathed
His tender last farewell,
A Guide, a Comforter bequeathed
With us to dwell."

Everything in Christian faith and experience has been articulated by these glorious hymnists so that now we can express our deepest emotions and our richest joys through them. "I believe in God the Father," is the first article of our creed and, when we worship, we can assent together to this truth. Nothing can be finer than Whittier's lines. These

are the final lines from his poem "The Brewing of Soma." Soma was a plant found in North India. As an intoxicant it was believed to be dear to the gods. Those who drank of Soma were supposed to mount to the gates of heaven. The Quaker minstrel shows the true source of joy in the realization of the Fatherhood of God.

"Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
Forgive our foolish ways!
Reclothe us in our rightful mind,
In purer lives Thy service find,
In deeper reverence, praise.

"Drop Thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of Thy peace."

All that we believe of Christ can be told in many a lovely hymn. In the consciousness of the Living Christ we find a never-ending culture. J. H. Gurney had a vivid conception of this when he sang:

"We saw Thee not when Thou didst come
To this poor world of sin and death,
Nor e'er beheld Thy cottage home
In that despisèd Nazareth;
But we believe Thy footsteps trod
Its streets and plains, Thou Son of God.

"We did not mark the chosen few,
When Thou didst through the clouds ascend,
First lift to heaven their wondering view,
Then to the earth all prostrate bend;
But we believe that mortal eyes
Beheld that journey to the skies."

The believer's faith in Christ, his present trust and joy in the Saviour are best told in hymns. We have a pathetic illustration of that in the dying of Henry Drummond. His biographer says: "In the afternoon Dr. Barbour played to him the music of the hymn, 'Art thou weary, art thou languid?' and other hymn tunes, with no response. Then he tried the old Scots melody of 'Martyrdom,' to which Drummond beat time with his hand, and joined in the words:

> "I'm not ashamed to own my Lord,
> Or to defend His cause,
> Maintain the glory of His Cross,
> And honour all His Laws."

When the hymn was done, he said: 'There's nothing to beat that, Hugh!'"[1]

It was the Apostle's exhortation that by psalms and hymns and spiritual songs Christians should teach and admonish one another, and that is constantly being done in the singing of the churches. That the Christian life is a warfare we feel, and it is part of the culture of worship to inspire the Christian soldier in the fight. We feel that in J. M. Neale's translation of the lines of Andrew of Crete.

> "Christian! dost thou see them on the holy ground,
> How the hosts of darkness compass thee around?
> Christian! up and smite them, counting gain but loss;
> Smite them! Christ is with thee, soldier of the Cross!"

Neale once said that "Religion is the solidest of realities," but he was well aware that the Christian life is a "Holy War."

[1] *The Life of Henry Drummond*, by George Adam Smith, p. 468 (Hodder & Stoughton).

The beauty of youthful consecration is never absent from the Christian mind. Culture must begin at the beginning of life. That is the truth of Christian baptism. Life must be a continuous and extensive culture and early dedication is to be desired. We mean that when we sing and encourage the young to sing Marianne Farningham's lovely hymn:

"Just as I am, Thine own to be,
Friend of the young, who lovest me,
To consecrate myself to Thee,
O Jesus Christ, I come.

"In the glad morning of my day,
My life to give, my vows to pay;
With no reserve and no delay,
With all my heart I come.

"I would live ever in the light,
I would work ever for the right,
I would serve Thee with all my might,
Therefore to Thee I come.

"Just as I am, young, strong, and free,
To be the best that I can be
For truth, and righteousness, and Thee,
Lord of my life, I come.

"With many dreams of fame and gold,
Success and joy to make me bold;
But dearer still my faith to hold;
For my whole life, I come.

"And for Thy sake to win renown,
And then to take my victor's crown,
And at Thy feet to cast it down;
O Master, Lord, I come."

Christians sing in the morning and sing at evening too. "My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning," the Psalmist cried, and that is the feeling of the Christian whose life is being cultured.

George MacDonald thrilled to the glory of the new-born day

"O Lord of Life, Thy quickening voice
Awakes my morning song;
In gladsome words I would rejoice
That I to Thee belong.

"I see Thy light, I feel Thy wind,
Earth is Thy uttered word;
Whatever wakes my heart and mind,
Thy presence is, my Lord.

"Therefore, I choose my highest part,
And turn my face to Thee;
Therefore, I stir my inmost heart
To worship fervently.

"Lord, let me live and act this day,
Still rising from the dead;
Lord, make my spirit good and gay,
Give me my daily bread.

"Within my heart, speak, Lord, speak on,
My heart alive to keep,
Till comes the night, and, labour done,
In Thee I fall asleep."

And at evening time we sing. T. T. Lynch was a glorious hymnist. We learn that when he was a boy it was his great ambition to publish a book of hymns. He composed a dedication in anticipation. It was addressed to himself. "This remarkable document began:

'Dearest Myself—As you have had some concern in writing these verses, and are besides my oldest and most intimate friend, it is but proper that I should dedicate them to you. I wish you to take this rather as a token of affection than respect. Our near relationship and close intimacy make me still retain some regard for you, although you have

much injured me and thwarted many of my designs, etc.' This curious address, over which Mr. Lynch had many a laugh in after years, concluded, 'I remain, My dearest Myself, Your affectionate though injured companion, I.' Both the poems and the dedication were written before he had reached his fifteenth year."[1]

This was his evening prayer:

"How calmly the evening once more is descending,
As kind as a promise, as still as a prayer;
O wing of the Lord, in Thy shelter befriending,
May we and our households continue to share."

Christians, too, have longings and dreams of the life beyond and above. There is an other-worldliness which is essential to the culture of the Christian life here. The Rev. H. R. Haweis's hymn was a favourite of Mr. Spurgeon. It was sung to him during his last illness and just before he died. The children of Stockwell Orphanage sang it at his funeral. Sir Arthur Sullivan is to be as warmly praised for the tune as the poet for the words.

"The Homeland! The Homeland!
The land of the free-born;
There's no night in the Homeland,
But aye the fadeless morn;
I'm sighing for the Homeland,
My Heart is aching here;
There's no pain in the Homeland,
To which I'm drawing near."

[1] *Famous Hymns and Their Authors*, by F. A. Jones, p. 300 (Hodder & Stoughton).

These hymnists were Christians and in love with the culture Jesus gives. How could they have phrased such thoughts and feelings if their lives had not been hidden in God in Christ? Their very life was in Christ. They breathed the very breath of culture. Their confessions are proof of that. Their intimacy of life in Christ was most remarkable.

Dr. George Matheson has told us how he came to write his immortal hymn, "O Love that wilt not let me go." He says: "My hymn was composed in the manse of Innellan on the evening of 6th of June, 1882. I was at that time alone. It was the day of my sister's marriage, and the rest of the family were staying over night in Glasgow. Something had happened to me, which was known only to myself, and which caused me the most severe mental suffering. The hymn was the fruit of that suffering. It was the quickest bit of work I ever did in my life. I had the impression rather of having it dictated to me by some inward voice than of working it out myself. I am quite sure that the whole work was completed in five minutes, and equally sure that it never received at my hands any retouching or correction."[1]

Frances Ridley Havergal lived and wrote in the culture of Christ. Her testimony is startling. In letters to a friend, she wrote: "I can never set myself to write verse. I believe my King suggests a thought and whispers me a musical line or two,

[1] *The Life of George Matheson*, by Dr. D. Macmillan, p. 181 (Hodder & Stoughton).

and then I look up and thank Him delightedly, and go on with it. That is how the hymns and poems come. . . . . The Master has not put a chest of poetic gold into my possession, and said, 'Now use it as you like.' But He keeps the gold, and gives it me piece by piece just when He will and as much as He will, and no more. . . . . I often smile to myself when people talk about 'gifted pen' or 'clever verses,' etc., because they don't know that it is neither, but something really much nicer than being 'talented' or 'clever.'"[1]

Charles Wesley had similar inspirations. John Richard Green has paid tribute to the culture his hymns produced. He says: "Charles Wesley . . . came to add sweetness to this sudden and startling light. He was the 'sweet singer' of the movement (Methodism). His hymns expressed the fiery convictions of its converts in lines so chaste and beautiful that its more extravagant features disappeared. The wild throes of hysteric enthusiasm passed into a passion for hymn-singing, and a new musical impulse was aroused in the people which gradually changed the face of public devotion throughout England."[2]

We are happy to call attention to Henry Betts' remarkable book, "The Hymns of Methodism in their Literary Relations." He says: "The best work of Charles Wesley abides for the universal Church in the *Collection of Hymns for the Use of*

[1] *Memorials of Frances Ridley Havergal*, pp. 108, 109 (Nisbet & Co., Ltd.).

[2] *A Short History of the English People*, by John Richard Green, p. 719 (Macmillan & Co., Ltd.).

the People called Methodists of 1780—an anthology, selected mainly from the vast mass of his brother's work by John Wesley—of which so unprejudiced a critic as Dr. Martineau declared that it was 'after the Scriptures, the grandest instrument of popular religious culture that Christendom has ever produced.' "[1]

This intimacy of life in Christ, this identification, indeed, with Christ was observable in the experiences of our sweetest hymnists. In reveries and ecstasies they were in tune with the Infinite, cultured to the highest. No wonder we find refinement in the reading and singing of their hymns! The hymns are Christian and an abiding and continuous ministry of culture.

[1] *The Hymns of Methodism in their Literary Relations*, by Henry Betts, p. 3 (The Epworth Press).

CHAPTER X.

Christianity and Fiction.

WE hesitate as we plunge into this deep sea. Fiction has been written by hundreds of writers and many of them have published numerous books.

There was a time when the novel was anathema to many Christians. The very mention of a novel created consternation and even loathing. It was believed that works of the imagination were works of evil and that nothing but irreligion could be produced by the reading of them.

Happily we were free from this restriction, and in the earlier years of life made acquaintance with a good many novelists and their stories.

The first fiction we ever read were the stirring and exciting adventure tales of Jules Verne, Captain Frederick Marryat and Captain Mayne Reid. There was nothing positively Christian in them, but there was certainly nothing un-Christian. They were just healthy, imaginative, blood-curdling,

thrilling stories, on land and sea, in cities and on the prairies. Of Jules Verne it was said that he "struck a new vein in fiction—exaggerating the possibilities of present-day science and giving ingenious verisimilitude to narratives of adventure carried out by means of marvellous inventions." When we think of it we are amazed at the prevision of these fictionists. In their famous stories they anticipated the wonders with which we are now familiar. We never hear the names of these stirring writers without a feeling of gratitude. They brightened and warmed the hours of many a winter night, gave scope to our wonderment and imagination, and aroused some of the deep human passions of sympathy and heroism. Assuredly they were always on the side of the "angels" and never on the side of the "fiends."

In later years we read much of the standard fiction, the fiction which has stood the test of time and secured, not so much the praises of the critics, as the allegiance of the people. In the end it is not the literary critics who decide but the great mass of the readers of the nation.

Among others we read Goldsmith, Jane Austen, Sir Walter Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, The Brontës, George Eliot, Charles Kingsley, Charles Reade, Wilkie Collins, Mrs. Humphry Ward, Mrs. Gaskell, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Hall Caine, Robert Louis Stevenson, George MacDonald, George Meredith, Thomas Hardy, R. D. Blackmore, Beatrice Harraden, J. M. Barrie, S. R. Crockett, Ian Maclaren, and some of the more modern novelists.

It is pedantry or prudery to pretend to despise the novel. Of the place and power of fiction in the nation's life there cannot be question. Alexander Smith, in *Dreamthorp*, has a whimsical reference to the romance that gathers round a novel.

"An old novel has a history of its own. When fresh and new and before it had breathed its secret, it lay on my lady's table. She killed the weary day with it, and when night came it was placed beneath her pillow. At the seaside a couple of foolish heads have bent over it, hands have touched and tingled, and it has heard vows and protestations as passionate as any its pages contained. Coming down in the world, Cinderella in the kitchen has blubbered over it by the light of a surreptitious candle. . . . . Tied up with many a dingy brother, the auctioneer knocks the bundle down to the bidder of a few pence, and it finds its way to the quiet cove of some village library, where with some difficulty . . . . . it tells its old stories, and wakes tears, and blushes, and laughter as of yore. . . . . It is impossible to estimate the benefit which such books have conferred. How often have they loosed the chain of circumstance! What unfamiliar tears—what unfamiliar laughter they have caused! What chivalry and tenderness they have infused into rustic loves! Of what weary hours they have cheated and beguiled their readers! The big, solemn history-books are in excellent preservation; the story-books are defaced and frayed, and their out-of-elbows condition is their pride, and the best justification of their

existence. They are tashed, as roses are, by being eagerly handled and smelt."[1]

Novels are transcripts of life, imaginative, of course, but, nevertheless, true to life. There is nothing more interesting to human beings than other human beings. To see life, to see personalities in the actual process of living, to study motives and to see how actions work out the results coiled up in them, is one of the most fascinating studies of the human mind. Surely that is why G. K. Chesterton affirms that the key to fiction is "Sympathy," and especially with people in the "awkward corners of life."

Many novels have been written with an avowedly Christian purpose. They were social studies, exposures of the tyrannies and iniquities of life. The veils were torn away and the people were allowed to see what was going on in their name, not that their actual permission had been obtained but that the evils were there by custom and law. These novelists were prophets, social reformers, and political agitators. In every case it was Christian. The fictionists were preachers. They expressed their thoughts in story-form rather than in sermonic form.

Charles Kingsley, for example, in his novels simply preached what he expounded in the pulpit and on the platform. When in London he preached his memorable sermon on "The Message of the Church to the Labouring Man." He said: "All systems of society which favour the accumulation of capital in a few hands, which oust the masses

[1] *Dreamthorp*, by Alexander Smith, pp. 20-22 (George Routledge & Sons, Ltd.).

from the ground which their forefathers possessed of old, which reduce them to the level of serfs and day-labourers living on wages and on alms, which crush them down with debt, or in any way degrade and enslave them, or deny them a permanent state in the commonwealth, are contrary to the kingdom of God which Jesus proclaimed."[1]

To his friend Ludlow, who had sought to restrain his ardour by quoting the passage: "He that believeth shall not make haste," Kingsley tartly replied: "You say, 'He that believeth shall not make haste,' but I think, he that believeth *must* make haste or get damned with the rest."[2]

He minded not that he was called "The Chartist Parson." He was essentially a preacher in *Yeast*. "It was written," his wife said, "with his heart's blood." And no wonder, when we remember the miseries of the agricultural population. *Alton Locke* appeared two years later and was an exposure of the horrors and degradations of the sweater's den.

Froude, whose staunch friend Kingsley was at a time when he seemed to have no other, shows us Kingsley's redeeming zeal in a letter he wrote to a mutual friend, another cleric.

"Kingsley is such a fine fellow—I almost wish, though, he wouldn't write and talk Chartism, and be always in such a stringent excitement about it all. He dreams of nothing but barricades and provisional Governments and grand Smithfield

[1] Quoted by George Jackson in *A Young Man's Bookshelf*, p. 207 (The Epworth Press).
[2] Page 206.

bonfires, where the landlords are all roasting in the fat of their own prize oxen. He is so musical and beautiful in poetry, and so rough and harsh in prose, and he doesn't know the least that it is because in the first the art is carrying him out of himself, and making him forget just for a little that the age is so entirely out of joint."[1]

Charles Reade was another Christian novelist—reformer. In *Hard Cash* he showed the cruelties and infamies of the private lunatic asylums of the day. There were incidents in that realistic novel we have never forgotten all these years. They were burnt into the memory. No wonder they led to reform! In *Foul Play* he told of the iniquities of ship knackers. *Put yourself in his place* was an attack on the weaknesses of Trade Unionism. In *Never too late to mend* he anathematized the prison system of the day. These novels were Christian messages. They breathe the passion for justice and truth. They expound the Golden Rule and the New Commandment.

Harriet Beecher Stowe's soul-moving story, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, was written to expose the horrors of the slave-trade. It first appeared in the *National Era*, one of the anti-slavery journals. It is claimed that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* struck the death-knell of the hideous traffic.

In this connection mention must be made of Mrs. Henry Wood's Temperance story, *Danesbury House*. The domestic miseries, the losses and

[1] *Life of Froude*, by Herbert Paul, p. 47 (Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd.).

shames which the liquor evil brings were all ruthlessly exposed.

We have a wealth of fiction, close to life, superbly realistic, human through and through, all clean, where vice is seen as vice and virtue is seen as virtue, fiction that not only fascinates but sweetens and strengthens and inspires the heart. Much of it is literature. Some of it is unsurpassed, immortal. To know it and to appreciate it is culture.

Charles Dickens has an unchallengable place in fiction. Clement Shorter declares that he is "the most popular writer that our literature has seen." It has been the fashion of some to say that he was "the novelist of the half-educated," while others have suggested that his humour would soon be out-of-date. The critics were in error. New and complete editions have been published, and the people still read with interest the pathos and humour of *The Pickwick Papers*, *Oliver Twist*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, and *Barnaby Rudge*.

G. K. Chesterton hits the mark in these comments.

"The rise of Dickens is like the rising of a vast mob. This is not only because his tales are indeed as crowded and populous as towns; for truly it was not so much that Dickens appeared as that a hundred Dickens characters appeared. . . . . Dickens was a mob—and a mob in revolt; he fought by the light of nature; he had not a theory, but a thirst. . . . . His thirst was for things as

humble, as human, as laughable as that daily bread for which we cry to God. . . . . Dickens . . . . . is truly the great realist also. For he had no abstractions; he had nothing except realities out of which to make a romance. . . . . Dickens was frequently horrible; he was never cruel. The art of Dickens was the most exquisite of arts; it was the art of enjoying everybody."[1]

Thackeray was enraptured with Dickens.

"David Copperfield!" he writes to a correspondent. "By Jingo! It is beautiful! It is charming! Bravo Dickens! It has some of his very brightest touches—those inimitable Dickens touches which make such a great man of him. And the reading of the book has done another author a great deal of good. . . . . It has put me on my mettle and made me feel that I must do something; that I have fame and name and family to support."[2]

We do not forget *The Christmas Carol*. Many people never have the Christmas feeling till they have read the New Testament story of the Birth of Christ, heard Handel's *Messiah*, and read again *The Christmas Carol*.

William Makepeace Thackeray's fame rests on five great novels: *Vanity Fair*, *Pendennis*, *The Newcomes*, *The Virginians*, and *Esmond*. Just as Dickens was said to be the novelist of the poor, so Thackeray was claimed as the novelist of the well-to-do classes. We have been much interested

[1] *The Victorian Age in Literature*, by G. K. Chesterton, pp. 79-119 (Williams & Norgate).

[2] *Victorian Literature*, by Clement Shorter, p. 44.

in Nathaniel Wright Stephenson's *The Spiritual Drama in the Life of Thackeray*. He says that between *Vanity Fair* and *The Newcomes* Thackeray had been spiritually converted. In the former we have this pessimistic conclusion: "Ah! Vanitas Vanitatum! which of us is happy in this world? which of us has his desire? or having it is satisfied? Come, children, let us shut up the box and the puppets for the play is played out." But in *The Newcomes* he writes: "The Father of all sends illness, death, care and grief out of which come love, steadfastness, consolation."

This was the prayer Thackeray wrote. He showed it to a friend who was able to recall it long afterwards. "He prayed that he might never write a word inconsistent with the love of God or the love of man; that he might never propagate his own prejudices or pander to those of others; that he might always speak the truth with his pen, and that he might never be actuated by a love of greed. I particularly remember that the prayer wound up with the words: 'For the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.'"[1]

The three Brontë sisters have a romance all their own. There is something pathetic in the interest taken in their lives and writings. All lovers of literature are familiar with Mrs. Gaskell's *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* and Clement K. Shorter's *Charlotte Brontë and her Circle*. G. K. Chesterton explains part of the fascination in this

[1] *The Spiritual Drama in the Life of Thackeray*, by N. W. Stephenson, pp. 171, 172 (Hodder & Stoughton).

way. "What the Brontës really brought into fiction was exactly what Carlyle brought into history; the blast of the mysticism of the North. They were of Irish blood settled on the windy heights of Yorkshire; in that country where Catholicism lingered latest, but in a superstitious form; where modern industrialism came earliest and was more superstitious still."[1]

Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, and Anne Brontë's *Agnes Grey*, especially the two former, were revelations of extraordinary moral insight and literary skill. Speaking of *Wuthering Heights*, Mr. Chesterton says that it "might have been written by an eagle," so singular was her imagination, "sometimes superhuman—always inhuman."[2]

Many criticisms have turned about George Eliot but her place is firmly established. The feeling of many to her was almost idolatry. She changed in her views of the things supernatural, but her sympathy with Christianity is evident and her moral emphasis is terrific. Her versatility is amazing. She could describe an evangelical clergyman, a Dissenting Minister, and all Methodists know how sympathetically she pictured their life. We can hear Dinah Morris preaching to the village crowd.

The late Professor W. G. Elmslie was an enthusiastic admirer of George Eliot. Sir. William Robertson Nicoll, in his Memoir of his friend, says: "I remember another remark of his about George

[1] *The Victorian Age in Literature*, p. 111. [2] Page 113.

Eliot which is worth quoting, but to appreciate its point I must introduce a word of explanation. I had, just at that time, drawn up a memorial on a subject in which we were both interested. Avoiding the conventional 'wharfoes' which 'Uncle Remus' has satirized in such documents, I had worded the appeal with perhaps exaggerated directness. Each sentence contained a distinct proposition, and the whole was expressed with something of that oracular emphasis with which, in those days, Victor Hugo used, from time to time, to address the citizens of Paris. After talking of this composition, and the subject of which it formed part, the conversation turned on George Eliot. I referred to 'Romola'—especially to the closing scenes in the life of Savonarola, which, as it has always seemed to me, touch the highest point that has been reached in analysis of the drama of spiritual conflict. As I recalled the passage in which the disciplined imagination of the writer shows us the great Florentine stripped, one after another, of all those dazzling evidences of divine favour with which he used to feed his soul in pride, till there is nothing left to tell him of the unforsaking love of God save the lowly witness of his own bowed and penitent heart, the eyes of my companion grew bright with a large approval. After a pause he said, 'If we find George Eliot is not in heaven when we get there, I think you and I will have to draw up a memorial—in the style of Victor Hugo."[1]

[1] *Professor Elmslie, D.D.*, by W. Robertson Nicoll & A. N Macnicoll, p. 42 (Hodder & Stoughton).

Who can ever forget the first reading of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter?* It has been made the theme of many sermons. The novelist was a brave and stern preacher of righteousness. "Nothing is so much our own as our sins." That is the truth powerfully presented and proved. What a masterpiece of fiction it is! The characters stand out plainly: The Rev. Arthur Dimmesdale, who had sinned and yet carried on his ministry and public work in Salem with the terrible secret in his soul; Hester Prynne, the woman with whom he had been guilty of sin; the little Pearl, the offspring of their guilty love, and Roger Chillingworth, the husband of the woman, whom the tragedy turned into a fiend, nursing his desire for revenge for seven long years. The woman wears on her breast the embroidered scarlet letter "A," proclaiming the fact that she is an adulteress. Arthur Dimmesdale, too, has the scarlet letter, not embroidered on his coat, but branded on his flesh, stamped there by inward remorse.

The climax is awful in its dramatic power and in the intensity of the minister's penitence. He had preached the election sermon on the appointment of the new Governor. Then, calling Hester and the child to his side, he stands with them on the pillory in the market-place. There, in the sight and hearing of the crowd, he tells his guilty secret.

"At last!—at last—I stand upon the spot where, seven years since, I should have stood. . . . . Lo,

the scarlet letter, which Hester wears! Ye have all shuddered at it. Wherever her walk hath been—wherever, so miserably burdened, she may have hoped to find repose—it hath cast a lurid gleam of awe and horrible repugnance round about her. But there stood one in the midst of you, at whose brand of sin and infamy ye have not shuddered!"

"With a convulsive motion he tore away the ministerial band from before his breast. It was revealed!"

The Scarlet Letter is great as art; it is infinitely greater as ethic.

An entirely different appeal is made in George MacDonald. We remember when we first read his most entrancing books: *Robert Falconer*, *David Elginbrod*, and *Alec Forbes*. Coulson Kernahan rejoiced in him as "A Child of the Kingdom." He says: "Of George MacDonald we may say, in a Scriptural phrase of quaint simplicity, that he is a 'man who walks with God.' He is the Saint John of modern literature. His loyalty to his Lord is just such a love as that which the disciple whom Jesus loved bore to his Master. Something there is in it of a woman's protecting tenderness as well as of a man's stern strength. Had he been of the company of those who watched with Jesus in the garden, one can readily believe that, at the approach of his Master's enemy, there would have kindled in his eyes such fire of menace as kindles in the eyes of even a gentlewoman when danger to her child draws nigh."[1]

[1] *Wise Men and a Fool*, p. 51.

Speaking of George MacDonald's mind this is what he says: "Dr. MacDonald is the possessor, not of a mint, but of a gold-mine of beautiful thoughts about the Fatherhood of God, the child-likeness of the Christian, poetry, music, German mysticism, and Elizabethan literature."[1]

There is prescience in these reflections of the critic: "Dr. MacDonald is not a born novelist. . Strictly speaking, he is not a novelist at all. . . . . He can do anything with the point of a pen except keep to the point of a story. . . . . He is primarily a poet, a seer, and a preacher; and if he have elected to be a fiction-maker for that House of Entertainment over which Mr. Mudie presides, be sure that he will somehow contrive to smuggle in a sermon between the leaves."[2]

Robert Louis Stevenson, like the Brontë sisters, has cast a spell on the world. He loved his art and lived for it, as he confesses. He took infinite pains to master the instrument of his art. His novels have given endless and pure delight; *Treasure Island*, *The Master of Ballantrae*, and *The Wrecker*. *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is a study in the duality of personality and teaches the lesson every human soul needs to learn. We must give the higher nature the dominance in all our ways. By his literary studies and his poems, especially his *A Child's Garden of Verse*, he lives in the affectionate gratitude of multitudes. We know how interested he was in missions in the South

[1] Page 57. [2] Page 73.

Seas and of his reverence and affection for the famous missionary, James Chalmers.

Speaking of Robert Louis Stevenson we are reminded of the great novelist, George Meredith. We recall the absorption we felt when we read *The Ordeal of Richard Feveral.* Robert Louis Stevenson admired Meredith's *The Egotist.* "I should never forgive myself," he said, "if I forgot 'The Egotist,' which, of all the novels I have read (and I have read thousands) stands in a place by itself. I have read 'The Egotist' five or six times, and I mean to read it again."[1]

Thomas Hardy fills a unique place. It is many years since we read *Far from the Madding Crowd* but we know how we were held by it. He is the admired of all bookmen and writers, and his influence has ever been on the side of the highest and noblest life.

We must not forget Mrs. Gaskell's powerful story: *Mary Barton.* It is the story of a Manchester factory-girl. It is full of Christian teaching and feeling. *Cransford* is a beautiful idyll of village life.

Sir Hall Caine has told of his indebtedness to the Bible for the ideas of his popular novels: *The Bondman, The Deemster, The Scapegoat, The Manxman,* and *The Christian.* All these deal with the great human problems of life and the emphasis is ever for the true and eternal

Beatrice Harraden's name will always be honoured because of *Ships that pass in the Night.* Who can

[1] *Victorian Literature,* by Clement Shorter, p. 61.

ever forget the Disagreeable Man and Bernardine Holme?

Annie Swan, by her numerous stories, has been a Christian teacher for many years. There are homes where pride is felt in the possession of all her works.

Marie Corelli has a wide audience. We think of *The Master Christian*, *God's Good Man*, and *Barabbas*. We still think *Thelma* the best of her stories.

J. M. Barrie opened a new vein when he described his own people in *Auld Licht Idylls*, *A Window in Thrums*, and *The Little Minister*. The picture of his mother in *Margaret Ogilvy* is immortal.

The thought of the Scottish mother brings to mind the portrait of the Irish mother so wonderfully drawn in Dr. Alexander Irvine's *My Lady of the Chimney Corner*.

Ian Maclaren belongs to the same school. It is a joy to remember with what eagerness we looked forward each Thursday morning to the coming of *The British Weekly* when the first of his stories was being published serially. *Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush* has moved multitudes to smiles and tears.

We know that many others could have been mentioned, but enough has been suggested to prove how fortunate we are to have fiction so ennobling. Many of these novelists were sincere and devoted followers of Christ, and they used their imaginations and all their gifts of thought and speech in His service.

CHAPTER XI.

Culture in the Churches.

THE dream and prayer of every Christian heart is for the coming of Christ's Kingdom. This is the reign of Christ as Redeemer and Lord in the personal soul, in the home, in the nation in all its interests and activities and throughout the wide, wide world. We gladly recognize that many other institutions, societies and personalities are helping to establish the Kingdom in addition to the Christian Church and the members of all the churches. There are many who share the redeeming enthusiasm of Christ who are not associated with any Christian community. We never forget the pervasive influence of Christianity, its almost unconscious presence in the lives of many. Christianity is in the air, in the very breath we breathe. It is in the moral standards and in the spiritual judgments of life. It is in all the humanitarian and philanthropic movements which are among the glories of our life. We

should be false to the Lord we serve if we did not gratefully confess His far-spreading might and His all-pervasive ministry in the spheres where His Name is not officially recognized.

It still remains the ultimate fact that the Church of Christ is the chief agent for the spreading and the triumph of the Kingdom. Because the Church is the society of those who have made the same discovery as Peter and know that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the Living God," this society must be the real nucleus of the Kingdom.

We see the divine ideals and purposes of the Church. It is the abiding witness to the divine and spiritual and eternal in the heart and in human life. It is the continuance of the ministry of Him who is the Truth. It is the Body of Christ, the corporate human expression of the divine Life in fellowship and service. In the Church there is the purest communion, communion with God and communion with all who seek Him. It is impossible to overstate the significance of the Church in the world. We are not allying the Church with any denomination or party. All who name the Name of Christ and meet in that Name are in the Church and of the Church. Wherever Christ Jesus is there is the Church. What the Church has meant to thousands of families in their highest spiritual interests it is impossible even to imagine. The good is incalculable, the gains are beyond conception. And the boons of the Church in its spiritual care of the young are at once its best credential and its surest vindication

The preventive ministry of the Church should never be forgotten. Apart from the positive gains, the very presence of the Church is a deterrent, a restraining influence, a steady, silent, continuous redeeming force.

Everywhere and always the churches have been the ministers of culture. The ministry of a true church is nothing but culture. To be a member of a church is to be in the very centre of culture. The preaching of the Word is culture in the highest truth. Whatever criticisms may be passed on sermons the fact abides that preaching is one of the most effective organs of culture. It is not necessary for a man to have the cultures of the Universities to be a truly successful preacher of the Gospel. There is culture without and apart from the greatly honoured seats of secular learning. Culture is of the spirit. Culture is the love of the truth. Culture is a refinement of mind and soul in the quest and prayer for the knowledge that cometh from above. And this culture is diffused all the time in the churches. In the case of thousands of hearers the sermons of the sanctuary are among their best influences of culture.

Everything in a Christian service is culture. We have seen how priceless are the hymns of the Church, how essentially they are what we mean by culture. They are the purest literary conceptions of the eternal truth and, when sung with the intelligence and with the soul, the very singing of the words is a refining and uplifting experience.

The prayers, too, of the churches are the messengers of culture. The liturgical forms of prayer are phrased in memorable speech and extempore prayers are often of a truly ennobling type.

The very atmosphere of the church, when worship is being conducted, is cultural to the reverent and believing heart. The meeting-place itself, when it is sought in solitude and silence, is a means of culture, by the consciousness of the glories for which it stands, the memories it excites, and the realization of the place it fills in the communal life.

But more than this can be claimed for the churches. They have been the homes of all the many-sided cultures of our nature, and the unfailing inspiration thereto. The connection between the Church and the Library, the Gallery of Art, the Temple of Music and the Hall of Science is real and intimate. But for the churches there never would have been the wealth and variety of the cultures of life.

From the standpoint of piety there are three distinct types of churches in our land. Each has its own distinctive features. R. H. Coats in his *Types of English Piety* names them as the Sacerdotal, the Evangelical and the Mystical Types. The Sacerdotal type believes in the grace of Sacraments, an official priesthood, and the high uses of Symbolism and Art. The Evangelicals lay emphasis on sin and salvation and the Faith which is justification and eternal life. Their organization is flexible and they desire and cultivate simplicity

of worship. They have been specially distinguished in missionary, philanthropic, and humanitarian activities. The Mystical type seeks union with God and proclaims the value of the God-filled life. Feeling is emphasized and the seat of authority is found to be within.

Each of these types has its special dangers and defects, but each has its virtues and values, its strength and attractiveness.

We do not hesitate to say that each of these types has been a minister of culture to its own devotees in the things of the soul. Our Author gives illustrative examples of these. Of the Sacerdotal type he names Lancelot Andrewes, George Herbert and John Keble. The type Evangelical is represented by John Bunyan and William Cowper. Henry Vaughan and Samuel Taylor Coleridge are illustrations of the Mystical type.

In the fundamental things all these types are one. R. H. Coats says: "The truly characteristic experiences of the religious life are common to all the types and specially confined to none. All can show, for example, an acute sense of sin. . . No one type has the sole possession of the fountains of blessedness and heavenly peace, and there is remarkably little difference in the death-beds of the saints. . . . . Nor has any one type the monopoly of narrowness. The bigotry which denies salvation to the unbaptized is brother to the fanaticism which confines it to the elect, or which would exclusively reserve it for the mystically initiated. On the other hand, every type

can show fruit of righteousness and good works. Men who entertain the most diverse views on the theoretical aspects of Christianity, and who could not agree as to modes of worship, may yet be undistinguishable when it is a question of a kind action. . . . . Goodness of nature is confined to no type. . . . . All through the Church's history there has been a glorious variety in the characteristics of the saints. We are thankful for St. Francis, who walked with childlike wonder in a child's world. . . . . We are thankful also for her, Joan of Arc, the steadfast warrior maid, who sprang into the saddle at the call of God, and waved her country on to faith, to courage, and to hope. No less thankful are we for Thomas à Kempis, who draws us to his nook with his little book, and there lays bare to us the secrets of a heart which is both his and ours ; as well as for R. W. Dale, who takes us out of the cloister into the street again, and shows us how the saint should conduct himself amid the bustle and the din of a great city. How manifold they are, and what evidence do they give of the variegated grace of God ! In Lawrence, Havelock, and Gordon we see the saint as soldier ; in Howard, Müller, and Barnardo, the saint as philanthropist ; in Cromwell, Bright and Gladstone, the saint as statesman ; in Livingstone and Henry Martyn, the saint as missionary."[1]

William Ewart Gladstone has been named. What an illustration he was of all this ! He

[1] *Types of English Piety*, by R. H. Coats, pp. 257-260 (T. & T. Clark).

embodied and demonstrated in himself the whole of this contention. He was a man of culture, a Parliamentary genius, and the man with the most commanding intellect of his time. He was from beginning to end, in everything he thought and spoke and wrote and wrought a Christian man. Throughout his life he was a zealous and devoted member of the Episcopal Church. At the same time, for the greater part of his life, he was the idol of the Nonconformists. His character was more than his creed. Few men have lived who so combined the best things we call Christian and the best things we mean by culture.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon's letter to him may be quoted. Mr. Gladstone had signified his intention of worshipping at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in January, 1882. The great preacher wrote :

"I feel like a boy who is to preach with his father to listen to him. I shall try not to know that you are there at all, but just preach to my poor people the simple word which has held them by their thousands these twenty-eight years. You do not know how those of us regard you, who feel it a joy to live when a premier believes in righteousness. We believe in no man's infallibility, but *it is restful to be sure of one man's integrity*."

John Morley, Mr. Gladstone's illustrious biographer, italicized the last words, and adds : "That admirable sentence marks the secret."[1]

[1] *Life of Gladstone*, by John Morley, Vol. II., p. 104 (Macmillan & Co., Ltd.).

On the day of Mr. Gladstone's death Lord Salisbury in the House of Lords ended his noble tribute with these words:

"He will leave behind him, especially to those who have followed with deep interest the history of the later years—I might almost say the later months of his life—he will leave behind him the memory of a great Christian statesman. Set up necessarily on high—the sight of his character, his motives, and his intentions would strike all the world. They will have left a deep and most salutary influence on the political thought and the social thought of the generation in which he lived, and he will be long remembered, not so much for the causes in which he was engaged or the political projects which he favoured, but as a great example, to which history hardly furnishes a parallel, of a great Christian man."[1]

John Morley comments on this. "Nothing could be more true or better worth saying," he writes.

We repeat that Mr. Gladstone had received the best education the country could give. He was at Eton and at Oxford. We know how he absorbed all the knowledge and refinement which surrounded him. In his outlook on life, in his modes of thought, in his speech and accent he was cultured. What was the secret of it all? It was his love for and his faith in Christ. Dr. Trevor Davies speaks the exact word. "The greatness of the man was due to the fact that to extra-

[1] *Life of Gladstone*, Vol. II., p. 577.

ordinary natural powers there was added, by faith in Jesus Christ, a new principle of character which came to control and distinguish all that was his. We cannot conceive Gladstone without Christianity. He would still, of course, be great, but he would not have been what all men now acknowledge him to have been."[1]

All the churches, as the human and living expressions of the faith and love of Christianity, have each and all contributed to culture. It would be easy for the representatives of all the churches to prove this thesis. Not only among their own members and adherents but to the general life of the world each Christian communion has contributed.

In the Episcopal Church culture has been loved and promoted. For centuries they had the monopoly of the Universities. The ancient Grammar Schools were under their control. Elementary education was largely in their hands. It must be confessed that they were loth to share some of these interests with Nonconformists. It would be foolish to deny the contribution the Anglicans have made to the culture of British life. Indeed, we recognize it gratefully. It is a joy to know that now the Nonconformists are as much at home in Oxford and Cambridge as the Episcopalians themselves, and the rise and progress of the new universities has marked an immense leap in the culture of the people. The finest cultures are now open to the gifted of every class.

[1] *Spiritual Voices in Modern Literature*, by Trevor H. Davies p. 197 (Hodder & Stoughton).

All the scholars are agreed as to the culture of Cardinal Newman. For pure English his writings are unexcelled. His *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* should be read not simply to understand his religious opinions but for the charm of his style, the lucidity of his language, his mastery indeed of the English tongue. The Presbyterians have ever been lovers of learning and the leaders in literary studies. The Congregationalists and Baptists have used their freedom to advance into every field of secular scholarship. The Unitarians have furthered culture. There was undoubted truth in the answer given long ago as to the influence of Unitarianism. "We progress in such and such ways," said a member of an orthodox Church to a Unitarian; "but how do you Unitarians progress?" "By other churches adopting our principles while keeping their own names," was the answer.[1]

Dr. Richard Garnett affirms that Emerson's life vocation was "To lift Unitarianism out of sectarianism, to transform an originally rationalistic mode of thought into a mystic and transcendental one, to kill it as theology and bid it live as literature."[2] Divided as we are from Unitarianism, convinced that in denying the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ they are missing essential Christianity, we nevertheless recognize the influence of their teaching and the culture of their teachers. No church has all the truth. It is in the blended

[1] *Emerson* in the Great Writers series, by Richard Garnett, LL.D., p. 20 (The Walter Scott Publishing Co., Ltd.).

[2] Page 37.

teaching of all that we find the fulness of the human witness.

Professor Henry Drummond is a shining illustration of all this. He belonged to the Free Church of Scotland but there was a very real sense in which he belonged to all the churches. No man believed more thoroughly in the Church than he. Isolated Christian life was unthinkable to him. The Christian life was a life to be lived in the fellowship of Christian people.

He was certainly one of the most cultured men of his day. Trained in the University at Edinburgh and in the Divinity Hall of the Free Church of Scotland in Edinburgh, he became Professor of Natural Science in the Free Church College in Glasgow. His place as a scientist and scientific teacher is beyond all question. He was a pioneer, as we have seen, in seeking to show the interrelation between Science and Religion. His companions in study were all men who made their mark. They were undoubtedly among the cultured of their time. We have but to name James Stalker, John Watson, A. S. Paterson, and John F. Ewing, and later, Peter Thomson and D. M. Ross.

His books had great sales and created the deepest impressions. If he had done nothing more than write "Natural Law in the Spiritual World," "Tropical Africa," and "The Ascent of Man," he would have counted as one of the most suggestive and successful authors of the period.

But he was famous as an evangelist. It was during the first British campaign of Mr. D. L.

Moody and Mr. Ira D. Sankey that his marvellous evangelistic powers were discovered. Thereafter he became universally known as a winner of souls. His power of speech—he had a style which put him apart from all others—the matter of his unique discourses and the extraordinary personal charm he exercised made him not only welcomed everywhere but persistently sought after. Especially to students he appealed. He knew them. He loved them. He was well aware of the influence these hundreds and thousands of students would have in the life of the homeland and of the Colonies when they went out to fulfil their careers. To win these students for Christ became his overmastering passion. In this and other lands he made a personal appeal to them and with phenomenal results. His name will never die. Few men have been so beloved as he.

The testimonies to his character are altogether exceptional. Claims are made for him and tributes are paid to him the like of which we have seldom or ever heard. And these are not made by excited partisans but by the most discriminating of scholars and thinkers.

Principal George Adam Smith says: "There are hundreds of men and women who are sure that his was the most Christlike life they ever knew."[1]

And, as his biographer points out, Drummond was tested, severely tested, tested in the most unusual ways, yet his Christlikeness is always and unfailingly revealed.

[1] *The Life of Henry Drummond*, p. 1.

"In his brief life we saw him pass through two of the greatest trials to which character can be exposed. We watched him, our fellow-student and not yet twenty-three, surprised by a sudden and a fierce flame. Crowds of men and women, in all the great cities of our land, hung upon his lips; innumerable lives opened their secrets to him, and made him aware of his power over them. When his first book was published, he, being then about thirty-three, found another world at his feet; the great of the land thronged him, his social opportunities were boundless, and he was urged by the chief statesman of our time to a political career. This is the kind of trial which one has seen wither some of the finest characters, and distract others from the simplicity and resolution of their youth. He passed through it unscathed; it neither warped his spirit nor turned him from his accepted vocation as a teacher of religion.

"Again, in the end of his life, he was plunged to the opposite extreme. For two long years he not only suffered weakness and excruciating pain, but what must have been more trying to a spirit like his, accustomed all his manhood to be giving, helping and leading, he became absolutely dependent upon others. This also he bore unspoiled; and we, who had known him from the beginning, found him at the end the same humble, unselfish and cheerful friend, whom we loved when we sat together on the benches at college."[1]

[1] *The Life of Henry Drummond*, by George Adam Smith, p. 2 (Hodder & Stoughton).

There was nothing of the weak sentimentalist in Drummond. He was a Christian of the open air, the Christian of the happy and playful mind.

"Perhaps the most conspicuous service which Henry Drummond rendered to his generation was to show them a Christianity which was perfectly natural. You met him somewhere: a graceful, well-dressed gentleman, tall and lithe, with a swing in his walk and a brightness on his face, who seemed to carry no cares and to know neither presumption nor timidity. You spoke, and found him keen for any of a hundred interests. He fished, he shot, he skated as few can, he played cricket; he would go any distance to see a fire or a football match. He had a new story, a new puzzle, or a new joke every time he met you. . . . . Sometimes you would remember that he was Drummond the evangelist, Drummond the author of books which measured their circulation by scores of thousands. Yet there was no assumption of superiority nor any ambition to gain influence—nothing but the interest of one healthy human being in another. If the talk slipped among deeper things, he was as untroubled and as unforced as before; there was never a glimpse of a phylactery nor a smudge of 'unction' about his religion. He was one of the purest, most unselfish, most reverent souls you ever knew; but you would not have called him saint. The name he went by among younger men was 'The Prince'; there was a distinction and a radiance upon him that compelled the title."[1]

[1] Pages 2, 3.

Sir Archibald Geikie had exceptional opportunities of knowing Henry Drummond. Drummond was his first student when Geikie became the first Professor of Geology in Edinburgh. Afterwards they went on a geological expedition to the Rocky Mountains, and in later years they were in each other's society, and this is Sir Archibald's deliberate judgment of Drummond's character:

"I have never met with a man in whom transparent integrity, high moral purpose, sweetness of disposition, and exuberant helpfulness were more happily combined with wide culture, poetic imagination, and scientific sympathies than they were in Henry Drummond."[1]

This is enough to show that in Henry Drummond there was the complete combination of Christianity and culture. We have but to think of him in the many-sided aspects of his character and career to see how entirely his nature was purity and his mind culture.

Drummond was called "the poet of Science." Thinking of him we think of another who took all the churches in his wide embrace. The Christianity of Dr. George Matheson was culture and all his wisdom was of the Cross. "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" was the central and reconciling truth of all his knowledge. He knew that in Christ all find their unity and love and peace. It is perfectly expressed in his lovely hymn:

[1] Page 9.

"Gather us in, Thou Love that fillest all!
Gather our rival faiths within Thy fold!
Rend each man's temple veil and bid it fall,
That we may know that Thou hast been of old;
Gather us in!

"Gather us in! We worship only Thee;
In varied names we stretch a common hand;
In divers forms a common soul we see;
In many ships we seek one spirit-land;
Gather us in!

Each sees one colour of Thy rainbow light,
Each looks upon one tint and calls it heaven;
Thou art the fulness of our partial sight;
We are not perfect till we find the seven;
Gather us in!

"Thine is the mystic light great India craves,
Thine is the Parsee's sin-destroying beam,
Thine is the Buddhist's rest from tossing waves,
Thine is the empire of vast China's dream;
Gather us in!

"Thine is the Roman's strength without his pride,
Thine is the Greek's glad world without its graves,
Thine is Judea's law with love beside,
The truth that centres and the grace that saves;
Gather us in!

"Some seek a Father in the heavens above,
Some ask a human image to adore,
Some crave a spirit vast as life and love;
Within Thy mansions we have all and more;
Gather us in!"

Methodism has been the mother of culture from the very beginning. Of John Wesley's place in the Christian world it would be superfluous to speak. Augustine Birrell asserted that John Wesley could not be cut out of the national life. "No single figure influenced so many minds. No other man did such a life's work for England."[1]

[1] *Wesley's Journal, An Appreciation*, XIII (Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd.).

Many of our readers will remember the brilliant paper in which Frederic W. Macdonald compared and contrasted Bishop Butler and John Wesley. "Butler and Wesley," he said, "were the two greatest, most influential men in the English Church of the eighteenth century."[1]

It was John Wesley's personality finally which gave him his unrivalled power.

"Butler has influenced men's thought; Wesley influenced their conduct. Butler's influence was so much separated from his personality as is possible. Wesley's personality was the chief source of his influence. Life was another thing to multitudes after seeing and hearing him. An address from the pulpit, a few words spoken in private, gave them not only new ideas, but new aims and motives. A summons to leave home and occupation called hundreds of men from the farm, the loom, and the mine, and sent them forth as evangelists and missionaries. His approval was henceforth their highest earthly reward, his rebuke their most dreaded punishment."[2]

But John Wesley was in love with culture and ever on its quest. He had been to Oxford. In the centre of the culture of his time he had lived in the formative years of his life. It is remarkable that from the beginning of his speaking ministry he carried on a literary ministry. His faith in the written and printed word was unbounded. It is the simple fact that Methodism has been in literature from its birth.

[1] *Recreations of a Book-Lover*, by F. W. Macdonald, p. 143 (Hodder & Stoughton); [2] Page 163.

Rev. Thomas E. Brigden in *A New History of Methodism* says: "Wesley's practical enthusiasm for popular education made him a pioneer publisher of cheap literature. He did in his day what Knight and Chambers did in the next century. He filled his preachers' saddle-bags with cheap books, superseding the old chap-books.

"'Two and forty years ago,' he writes, 'having a desire to furnish poor people with cheaper, shorter, and plainer books than any I have seen, I wrote many small tracts, generally a penny a piece, and afterwards several larger.'

"They had an enormous circulation. Book-lovers may regard his abridgments—especially of Milton, Herbert, and Bunyan—as vandalism; to the practical mind of Wesley the needs of the poverty-stricken multitudes, whose intellects were awakened by the religious revival, condoned the deed. He and Dr. Coke formed the first Tract Society in 1782, seventeen years before the Religious Tract Society was established, and . . . . . thousands of copies of Words to Soldiers, Sailors and Smugglers were scattered broadcast.

"A list of Wesley's four hundred publications is given in Green's Bibliography. They constituted a working library for his schools and preachers, and, including his hymn-book, his original works and educational text-books, represented all that he thought most useful to the awakening congregations. His pungent wit is best revealed in his preface to his English Dictionary, and his fearless breadth in his brief introductions to the astonishing

collection of devotional and biographical masterpieces in his Christian Library."[1]

Here is the picture of John Wesley as the continuous student:

"From Wesley's Itinerary it may be gathered that he travelled two hundred and fifty thousand miles in his ministrations, during which he preached forty thousand times. In early life he was a great walker. His later and longer journeys were performed on horseback. Often he used the stage-coach, 'the machine,' as he calls it, the 'diligence,' or post-chaise. When he was sixty-three years of age, a carriage and pair was presented to him. He must be pictured for many thousands of hours riding on highways and by-ways, the reins lying loose on his horse's neck, while his hands hold up a book to his eyes, as he was near-sighted. At his next halting-place his ever-ready pen will exercise itself on that book in commendation, sharp criticism, or condensation for his followers; other literary matter or these letters will be written, or the thousand and one tasks of a shepherd of souls and bodies will engage him. But 'who besides Wesley ever turned the saddle and the open road and the changing English skies into a permanent study?' The door of one side of his coach was nailed up, and on the inside were shelves filled with books. Attached to the front of the coach was a board which was let down and used as a desk."[2]

[1] *A New History of Methodism:* Vol. 1, pp. 220-221 (Hodder & Stoughton).

[2] *Letters of John Wesley*, Edited by George Eayrs, pp. 6, 7 (Hodder & Stoughton).

John Wesley became a publisher. Among other things he issued "A Complete Library for those that fear God."

"Here is Wesley's first proposal of his 'Christian Library,' the pioneer of many such series of works by which literary enterprise has since enriched the world. This was limited to Practical Divinity, and consisted of extracts from and abridgments of the choicest pieces published in the English language. He issued the first volume next year from Kingswood School, and, in 1755, the last nine of fifty volumes. This made up the 'Library.' The necessary extraction and condensation must have involved for Wesley the miserly use of his moments amidst his incessant travelling and preaching in these years. He lost £200 by this venture, and used the familiar consolation of publishers and others in like case: 'Perhaps the next generation may know the value of it.' The Library was reprinted, 1819-1827."[1]

From Wesley's day till now Methodism has been the inspiration of culture. The Mother Methodist Church, in England and in other lands, has been the inspirer of Art and Science, of Literature in Prose and Poetry, of Music in all its branches, in the diffusion of knowledge and the refinement of all its people in mind and soul, in the home and in the world.

Methodism has produced its sculptors and painters, its musical composers, organists, and singers, its scientists and philosophers, its poets

[1] *Letters of John Wesley*, p. 303.

and hymnists, its bookmen and journalists. There is no sphere of culture where Methodists cannot be found.

We may take James Smetham as an example. He was an ardent Wesleyan Methodist, for twenty-five years the Teacher of Drawing at the Westminster Training College. In his pictorial diary each Sunday he sketched two pulpits with a note of the texts and the sermons. He prepared his lessons for the Sunday School at Stoke Newington by means of pictures. His eye was single, his mind devoted, his heart ever attuned to the call of Christ. His letters breathe the spirit of a truly Christian man. For long years he was a Methodist class-leader. This is how he writes about the members of his class :

" What I should greatly deprecate as a member of the Church of Christ, especially as a Methodist class-leader, would be to live a life exceptional at all. There is nothing for which I feel more thankful than the fact that I have hold of the sympathies of many to whom I could not in the least explain my views upon matters artistic. To see a perplexed look on the faces of my members, especially on those of the postman, policeman, carpenter, servant-girl, or chestnut-seller, would be a great pain. But I never do see it, and I hope I never may."[1]

For himself he needed culture. For the happiness and content of his mind he needed to develop

[1] *James Smetham ; Painter, Poet, Essayist,* by William G. Beardmore, p. 96 (The Epworth Press).

himself on three lines, in Art, Literature, and Religion, and so for years and years each day saw him busy with his brush for so many hours, so many hours with his books, and so many hours with his Bible.

He knew that he was regarded by some as an artist who had somehow failed. Within himself he knew that he had succeeded. Could anything speak of a truer culture than this?

"I do think I am a little sympathized with as a painter who 'has not got on somehow,' whereas in my own secret heart I am looking on myself as one who *has* got on, and got to his goal, as one who if he had chosen could have had a competence, if not a fortune, by this time, but who has got something a thousand times better, more real, more inward, less in the power of others, less variable, more immutable, more eternal, and as one who can afford a sly wink to those who know him, which wink signifies that he is not so sure that he is not going to do something comfortable in an outward and artistic sense, after all. But be this as it may, his feet are on a rock, his goings (so far) established, with a new song in his mouth and joy on his head—and 4/6 this blessed moment in his pocket, besides some postage stamps."[1]

Two years later he wrote:

"As a *man* I feel persuaded that my course of study has been right, and this joy no man can take from me. But as an *artist*—let me reflect. My

[1] *Letters of James Smetham*, Edited by Sarah Smetham & William Davies, p. 16 (Macmillan & Co., Ltd.).

friends on the outside can see what I was capable of twenty years ago, and how I might have had £5,000 in the bank, and been widely known. They are capable of judging this, but they can't tell how far it was necessitated by my history, my moral condition and the demands of my moral nature."[1]

He had a high conception of life. Life was for culture, he felt, the culture of his whole being. "Some who wish me well," he writes, "would like to see me grow richer, and, when they see the opportunities I get and the friends I have, they wonder that I should follow a chimerical course of study instead of the eligible openings which present themselves, and to those who do not know all my desires I really cannot explain myself."[2]

In another letter he cries: "I want not fame, but life, the soul's calm sunshine, life in the eye of God."[3]

James Smetham was singular in the ways in which he lived his life. We judge that he was quite unique, that no other human being spent his hours and days and years quite in the same fashion, but he is only one of many who have found in Christ the inspiration to the richest culture of which they were capable. It was a Methodist (Dr. William F. Moulton) who, as a youth, took this as his motto: "It is my duty to become all that I may become," and it was

[1] Page 16

[2] *James Smetham; Painter, Poet, Essayist*, by William G. Beardmore, p. 65 (The Epworth Press).

[3] *Letters of James Smetham*, p. 54.

because he had the grace of God in his heart that he felt the impulse, the moral necessity, to bring his nature to the highest excellence.

What can be asserted of the Mother Methodist Church can with equal right be claimed for the daughter Methodist churches.

From the beginning Primitive Methodism has been eagerly in pursuit of knowledge and culture. The Rev. Joseph Ritson in his *Romance of Primitive Methodism* has a splendid chapter on the romance of "Its Pursuit of Learning."

Hugh Bourne was as convinced and practical a believer in the power of the Press as the Founder of Methodism himself. One of the first things Hugh Bourne did was to establish the Book Room at Bemersley. He knew that the converts of the pioneer evangelists would need books to read. The grace of God in the heart would awaken desires for knowledge and he made the best provision possible.

The early preachers were taught to "give attention to reading" and it is simply marvellous how grandly they succeeded.

Mr. Ritson mentions some of the scholars of our church and, indeed, we hold their names in reverence. We are never likely to forget John Petty, James Macpherson, Thomas Greenfield, James Austin Bastow, Colin Campbell McKecknie, and Hugh Gilmore.

The story of the provision of the colleges is the outward and visible sign of the inward urge for ministerial equipment and fitness. The story of

our Connexional Magazines, the Centenary of which was fittingly celebrated in 1919, proves that the hunger for learning was widespread in our membership. The Preachers' Associations in the various districts were incentives to scholarship and the best available culture. The churches themselves were full of eagerness for mutual improvement. Mutual Improvement Classes and Debating Societies held under the auspices of the churches witnessed to the widespread desire for an ever-enlarging and an ever-ascending life. We gratefully recall and speak of these things and confess that Christianity was the motive and impulse of it all.

Mr. Sidney Webb handsomely acknowledged all this in his careful study of the miners in the County of Durham. From our own personal knowledge we can verify his conclusions but more than he has said is the truth. Here is his statement. After describing the terrible conditions of the people, industrially, socially and morally, he proceeds: "Into such a community, ignored by the statesmen of the time, and virtually given up as hopeless by cleric and philanthropist alike, there came, between 1821 and 1850, two inspiring influences, Religion and Trade Unionism. First to be named must be the Methodists, notably the humble, unschooled but devoted 'ranters,' carrying gradually from village to village the gospel of salvation of the Primitive Methodist Church. Very moving is it to read to-day of the tireless efforts of these unlettered, hard-driven, poverty-stricken men, nearly always themselves earning a precarious

living as manual, working, wage-earners, who nevertheless found the time and the means, as they gradually spread from one village to another, to gather together a tiny congregation, and to establish a humble meeting-place, which eventually became a chapel. Of their success in genuinely converting numbers of the miners there can be no doubt. . . . .

"The Methodist, whatever his shortcomings, became a man of earnestness, sobriety, industry, and regularity of conduct. Family after family became thus transformed, to serve in its turn as a centre of helpful influence. It is these men who, in the mining villages, have stood out as men of character, gaining the respect of their fellows."[1]

What Mr. Webb says is true.

"From the religious revival—taking from time to time different channels in different churches, manifesting itself now in this way and now in that, but persisting always in its call to the Spiritual in man—has come, I believe, a large part, not only of the change of life, and of the sobriety and earnestness of conduct, by which so many thousands of Durham families have been transformed, but also no small share of the elevation of character, and the zeal and energy, which have brought success to the other social movements of the past half-century. Is it too much to say that it is very largely upon the foundation laid in Durham by the humble 'Ranters' of 1821-1840,

[1] *The Story of the Durham Miners*, by Sidney Webb, pp. 21-23 (The Fabian Society).

and by the efforts of the families which have passed under their influence, that, in the various parts of the county, Co-operation and Friendly Societies, Trade Unionism and the Labour Party have been in the subsequent generations developed? "[1]

The frontispiece of Mr. Webb's little volume is a portrait of Alderman John Wilson, M.P., D.C.L. What an illustration he is of Christianity and culture! And what a demonstration he is of the culture inspired by the Christian churches! We remember the day of his burial. Three memorial services were held at the same time, one in the Jubilee Primitive Methodist Chapel of which he had been a member for years, the second in the Miners' Hall where for years he had guided the affairs of the Durham Miners' Union, and the third in the Bethel United Methodist Chapel. Crowded as these places were there were thousands in the streets unable to gain admission. No such sight had ever been seen in the ancient and historic city. We remember the scene at the grave-side in St. Margaret's Cemetery. One of the addresses was given by Mr. John W. Taylor, then the Member of Parliament for Chester-le-Street, an honoured Primitive Methodist local preacher, and himself a splendid illustration of Christianity and culture, and the other address was by Dean Hensley Henson, now the honoured Bishop of Durham.

We know what John Wilson became—the General Secretary of the Durham Miners' Association, and

[1] Page 127.

the Member of Parliament for the Mid-Durham division. He was one of the best read men of his time. He was a student to the last. He had remarkable gifts of speech and he trained them to the highest perfection. The University of Durham conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Civil Law. He deserved all the honours he ever received.

He was the first to acknowledge that he owed everything to Christ and to the Primitive Methodist Church. Motherless at five, fatherless at twelve, he seemed to have little chance of making anything of his life. He made a great and glorious thing of his life because he found Christ and Christ inspired him to the highest.

This from his autobiography will show how Christianity incited him to culture. As soon as he was converted in the miner's cottage at the class meeting and joined the Primitive Methodist society this occurred.

"I sketched out an educational programme, to which as far as possible I adhered, more or less, every day. The main subjects were grammar, logic, history, shorthand, and the dictionary, which I read regularly, marking the words I was not conversant with for future reference. The dictionary I used was an etymological one, and to these, when I was placed on the local preachers' list, I added theology. These subjects I took for an hour a day in consecutive order. In respect to grammar, I had an old book (rather small) which I occasionally took to the mine with me, and if there were a few minutes to spare I availed myself

of the opportunity to commit a portion of it to memory. Or when just going out to work I did the same thing, and more especially a rule in syntax, which I considered one of the (if not the) most important parts of grammar. In history I had an old copy of Rollins in six volumes, which was kept close to the table end, and was oft brought into use when at my meals. In addition to these, which I looked upon as studies, I read poetry—Homer, Shakespeare, Milton, Pollock, and Cowper."[1]

What a man he was—truly Christian, truly cultured and cultured because Christian. When Emerson was dying, he caught sight of Carlyle's portrait hanging on the wall. "*That* is the man, my man!" he whispered. So many think to this day of John Wilson.

That the Christianity of the churches tends to culture has been proved in many lives with which fortunately we have been familiar. Now in our recollections we think of John Wilson and Henry J. Mein together. They were very different in many ways, but in the fundamental things they were one. Henry Mein was our ideal of a Christian gentleman. He began life in the coal mine at twelve years of age, and came to an influential position in the mining world. As a mining engineer he was frequently consulted and trusted, and as an employer of labour he had more than the confidence of his men. He was a member of

[1] *Memories of a Labour Leader*, by John Wilson, p. 208 (T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd.).

quite a small Primitive Methodist society, the Wind Mill society in the St. Helen's Auckland Circuit. But how he loved the little place and how he loved to worship with its people! His minister described him as the "Greatheart" of the district, and so he was. He was the bounteous benefactor of the poor and needy. And what a life of culture he lived! It was not only that he knew and loved books but that the beauty of their thoughts had passed into the texture of his mind. Busy man as he was, taking an active part in public affairs, he realized the truth of George Herbert's pregnant lines:

> "Man is one world, and hath
> Another to attend him."

Wherever he went and whatever the society all were conscious at once of his culture and of his genuine Christian spirit. It was really a tribute to the church to which he belonged that he found the fulness of life in its fellowship and testimony.

We could refer to many in illustration of this theme. We feel that we must speak of Sir William Hartley, the founder of this Lectureship. A loyal son of Primitive Methodism throughout his useful and greatly honoured life, the munificent friend of all good causes, his name and memory are very precious. Again and again, in public and in private, we have heard him express the ideal he cherished for our ministry. He desired "a cultured evangelism." It was his prayer that we should ever be evangelical in doctrine and evangelistic in

method. He also desired that culture should more and more give tone and accent, authority and persuasiveness to our ministry.

The College which fittingly bears his name has been and is a school of culture. We never think of Sir William Hartley without thinking of Dr. Peake. In him we see supremely the reality of Christian culture. It is our pride and joy that he is a son of our church. In him we see the proof that Primitive Methodism is not lacking in the incentives to culture as well as to service. And in his colleagues at the College we see further proofs that our church covers the whole range of life. Because we are a true Church of Christ we have all the things which accompany salvation. Principal Lockhart and his predecessors have all aimed at Christian culture and Dr. Peake's tutorial colleagues, Professors A. L. Humphries, M.A., W. L. Wardle, M.A., B.D., and Atkinson Lee, M.A., have sought to train their students in the wisdom which is culture and in the life which is Christian.

CHAPTER XII.

Culture in the Home.

TWENTY years ago a remarkable book was published on the conditions and problems of London. It was written by a group of students, sociologists, and politicians. They had made it their business to examine the actual life of the people. We read every word of it and, so far as we were able to judge, there was no exaggeration in any of their statements. Some of the facts were startling. There was much of pathos and of tragedy in their report. We remember the shock of surprise we got when we read this: "Street after street stretches out in which probably not a single book of any kind could be found by careful search from one end to the other. Even the superstitious cherishing of the family Bible in the cottage parlour has vanished before the pressure of modern existence."[1]

What were the mental and religious conditions of the people whose homes were so lamentably destitute of books? C. F. G. Masterman was the writer of the article entitled "Realities at Home."

[1] *The Heart of the Empire*, p. 29 (T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd.).

He was the authority for the statement we have quoted and he is the authority for this descriptive sentence. "The ordinary man of the ordinary street is neither a church-goer nor a criminal. His attitude may best be described as that of acquiescence—acquiescence sometimes shot with a vague discontent, more often with a certain fatuous cheerfulness."[1]

Twenty years ago, as now, there were hundreds and thousands of homes, not necessarily wealthy homes, not necessarily the homes of the upper middle class, but thousands of poor homes where there was a love of all the things we mean by culture. In all parts of the land there were homes where life was lived on the highest spiritual planes, where books were read and loved and prized, where music was practised and enjoyed, where the mind was set on the things which are lovely and pure and beauteous and of good report, where, even though the domestic conditions were humble and possibly mean, the inward life, the whole family life was enveloped and possessed by the truest culture.

Charles Wagner has written tenderly and memorably of the Home. Who that has read his chapters in *By the Fireside* can ever forget "The Roof Tree," "Two make One," "A Nursery of Men," "Golden Hair and Gray," "What those do who no longer do anything," "When the birds leave the Nest," "When the birds return to the Nest," and "Religion in the Home"?

[1] Page 29.

He helps us to see and feel all that Home can and should mean, all that home must mean if the individual is to come to the noblest, if the state is to be preserved and the nations Christianized. Nothing can ever take the place of the home. Only on love can a true home be founded. "The tie of blood, which united the members of a family, derives from another tie, a tie of choice, the result of attachment between two beings. Before the family, is the primordial fact of love. When a man and a woman agree to belong to each other, and to establish a home, the lines of their destinies merge, and their essential interests become identical. *Two make one* is the foundation stone of the pact."[1]

And because *Two make one* there is parental harmony. "When there is perfect harmony, no one knows who commands or who obeys. The two advance together like the wings of a bird, unconscious as to which is directing the flight. Harmony does not mean the subjection of one by the other, nor even the sharing of influence, husband and wife each intrenched behind his frontiers and his capacities; harmony is joint submission to reason, justice and truth. The question is not who commands, but what commands the situation. That the two are of unequal intelligence and foresight makes not the slightest difference; they need each other."[2]

[1] *By the Fireside*, by Charles Wagner, p. 31 (Hodder & Stoughton).

[2] Page 42.

Then, when husband and wife are parents, the authority of their personalities is immediately felt by their children. What could be wiser or truer than this? "Parental authority is not merely a thing of the moment when advice or direction is given; it is a ceaseless influence of the moral contact, of the actions, of the whole life. *Our children see us live.* Without reference to our words, it is in what they see of our deeds, unravel of our motives and intentions, perceive confusedly of our moral standards, that our authority lies. There are parents in lowly life, little apt at formulating rules of conduct or condensing into doctrine the wisdom they display, incapable even of putting into correct speech what they believe to be just and right, parents who have perhaps rarely spoken commands or dictated conduct, who, nevertheless, by the simple fact of their faithful, calm, and righteous living, have had an extraordinary influence over their children."[1]

And religion should be all pervasive in the home. In the perfect home there will be "Pure religion breathing household laws."

"The realm of the hearth is a source whence Religion properly speaking draws its supplies. . . . . Among the old and sacred words that the infirm lips of men have stammered before God, many had their origin under the humble roof of the family, and the sweetest name given to God he has culled from the lips of little children. Abba is one of the first human cries. Christ took it

[1] Page 66.

from the cradles of babes, and made it an offering of tenderness and confidence to God, a source of consolation and reassurance to man, of light among the obscurities of our life."[1]

Thinking of the home sanctified by religion we naturally think of Robert Burns's poem in which he immortalized the family piety of Scotland. Dean Stanley believed that Burns was "a wise, religious teacher," but Principal Rainy vigorously disputed this. He says: "We object to Robert Burns as a religious teacher, because he does not take his ground as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and as one who desired to follow Him. We are not judging whether, at any time in his life, he became such. Neither are we standing on any question of more or less orthodoxy. Neither are we questioning the beauty of the admiring tribute which he paid to Christian doctrine in *The Cotter's Saturday Night*. . . . . He does not take his ground and speak his rede as a believer in the Lord Jesus, and as one who desired to follow Him; as I suppose, because he was not prepared to take that responsibility, and was too honest a man to go further in that matter than his actual convictions warranted. . . . . Further, we see that when Robert Burns broke with the ancient habit or tradition of Scottish piety, whether that was his own fault or the fault of the Church, or of both, that breach brought with it a deplorable consequence."[2]

[1] Pages 291, 292.

[2] *Burns*, by Rev. L. Maclean Watt, pp. 159, 160 (W. Collins & Sons, Ltd.).

But let us listen to Burns, as he sees the scene and we see it through his eyes.

"The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha' Bible, ance his father's pride:
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin and bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales a portion with judicious care;
And 'Let us worship God!' he says, with solemn air."

Surely Maclean Watt is nearer the essential truth when he comments and confesses: "In *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, as I kneel down on the clay floor with the peasant family, round the gray-haired priest of that fireside, I feel Burns on his knees beside me, with his bonnet over his face; and I know that brave big heart is sobbing for sins that saddened him, and made the hard world leave him to his death—sins that were often but the brimming over of a life too full and too exuberant for the frail cup of clay that carried it. There is the breath of God in the page whereon that picture lies; but first, undoubtedly, the soul had known it, which made the page a living thing of beauty and of pathos."[1]

William Cowper has described the felicity of Home. It is a Winter night. It is all realistic. We can see the cheerful fireside and feel its comfort while the Winter's blast is all around.

[1] Pages 181, 182.

"O Winter, ruler of the inverted year,

* * * * * * * * * * *

I love thee, all unlovely as thou seem'st,
And dreaded as thou art, Thou hold'st the sun
A pris'ner in the yet undawning east,
Short'ning his journey between morn and noon,
And hurrying him, impatient of his stay,
Down to the rosy west; but kindly still
Compensating his loss with added hours
Of social converse and instructive ease,
And gath'ring at short notice, in one group
The family dispers'd, and fixing thought
Not less dispers'd by daylight and its cares.
I crown thee king of intimate delights,
Fireside enjoyments, home-born happiness,
And all the comforts that the lowly roof
Of undisturb'd retirement, and the hours
Of long, uninterrupted ev'ning know.

* * * * * * * * * * *

But here the needle plies its busy task,
The pattern grows, the well-depicted flow'r,
Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn,
Unfolds its bosom;

* * * * * * * * * * *

The poet's or historian's page by one
Made vocal for the amusement of the rest;
The sprightly lyre, whose treasure of sweet sounds,
The touch from many a trembling chord shakes out;
And the clear voice symphonious, yet distinct,
And in the charming strife triumphant still,
Beguile the night, and set a keener edge
On female industry. . . . ."

The evening ends in prayer and praise and the memory of the Providence which has never failed.

"The dangers we have 'scaped, the broken snare,
The disappointed foe, deliv'rance found
Unlook'd for, life preserv'd, and peace restor'd,
Fruits of omnipotent eternal love."[1]

[1] *The Domestic Winter Evening*, by William Cowper.

In Cowper's vision there were not only comfort and cosiness in the home but culture and, behind the culture and inspiring it, there was religion.

It is Christianity more than anything else which gives culture to the home. How can it be otherwise? It is the Christian religion which makes manhood and womanhood. It is the faith and law and love of Christ which sanctify the married union. It is Christianity which glorifies and consecrates childhood. It is the truth of Jesus which creates the sanctities and inspires the nobilities for which the home is the natural sphere.

In biographies and autobiographies such homes are described. They were not avowedly written to show the place and power of Christianity within the home. It is the life which is portrayed and it is easy to see that Christianity is the inspiration of it all. Without the faith and experience of Christ everything in these homes would have been different. They were what they were because the inmates of the home were believers and lovers of Christ. Here the evidence is voluminous and it is only possible even to name two or three.

In *Lady Victoria Campbell; a Memoir*, written by Lady Frances Balfour, we have the picture of an aristocratic Christian home. Lady Victoria was the eighth child of the Duke and Duchess of Argyll. When five years of age she was stricken with infantile paralysis. For fourteen years efforts were made to effect a cure. The best physicians were consulted in Liverpool, Brighton and London. Finally an operation was performed which made

cure impossible. Afterwards wherever she moved she needed her "sticks." Dr. Roth and the French mechanics designed for her what she called her "steel." It was a contrivance to keep her upright. She was thus a cripple to the end.

The home of the family was strongly but beautifully religious. Both at Argyll Lodge in London and in the Castle of Inverary in Scotland the home life was dominated by Christian truth and pervaded by Christian love. Lady Victoria herself devoted her years to the people in the Hebrides; some of the islands, indeed, belonged to her father's estate. She made a little home in Tiree and from here carried on her classes and guilds and beneficences. But for Christianity such a home could not have been. And there was nothing but culture anywhere. The home was all refinement. The life of each and of all the members of the family was devoted to the pursuit of the beauteous and ennobling things.

Many of the distinguished and talented were their friends. Great statesmen, writers, preachers and scholars were frequent visitors and the truest friends. Queen Victoria was a personal friend of the Duchess. Lady Victoria, indeed, at her baptism received the Queen's name at her request. Mr. Gladstone and Lord Macaulay were welcome guests and friends. The Memoir is a touching and vivid exhibition of life in the highest social circles made winsome and glorious by Christian love.

Here are brief glimpses into Lady Victoria's life.

"At Edinburgh, in St Giles', St. Cuthbert's, and St. Michael's, her presence was a familiar sight. Her love of all music, but especially good Church music, was intense, and she felt the inspiration of beautiful architecture. 'I weary for the beauty of St. Giles, after our Highland barns,' she would say; and when in London, the daily service in Westminster Abbey, where :—

'The organ rings
And the sweet choir sings
Along the emblazoned wall,'

was a treat she gave herself as often as she could manage to go."[1]

She had varied Biblical and literary interests.

"As well used as her Bible and her Psalm-book were Keble's *Christian Year*, the *Confessions of St. Augustine*, the *Imitation of Christ*, the works of St. Frances of Sales, and Dean Goulburn."[2]

She was enthralled with her work among the people of the islands and laughed at the discomforts of her lot.

"My father has actually agreed, without any demur, to let me try Tiree. I can read between the lines; he thinks I shall not persevere.

"My hope and desire and intention is to stay in Tiree, at all events four months, dating from November.

"Remember, if I have a fireplace which smokes not more than needful, a sofa, a tolerable bed, means of getting a hot bottle, it is all the luxuries I need.

[1] *Lady Victoria Campbell : A Memoir*, by Lady Frances Balfour, p. 220 (Hodder & Stoughton). [2] Page 221.

"If I had the language, the health, earlier training, I would have gone further afield for mission work."[1]

We have many pictures of manses and of the beautiful culture so often found there. F. W. Macdonald has commented on the number of literary men and women who were born and reared in ministers' homes. "The parsonage and the manse have sent into the world a goodly share of its brightest men and women. Goldsmith, Cowper, Coleridge, Hallam, Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, and Kingsley were parsons' sons, and the Sisters Brontë and Jane Austen were parsons' daughters."[2]

The proofs of this are everywhere. On the opening page of Miss Jane T. Stoddart's "life" of *W. Robertson Nicoll, L.L.D.* there is a unique picture of four adjacent manses from each of which a famous son came. The late Professor Elmslie was born in "the humble little Free Church manse of Insch," the son of the Rev. William Elmslie; the late Professor Robertson Smith was born in Keig, the son of Dr. Pirie Smith; the heroic Alexander Mackay of Uganda was the son of the Rev. Alexander Mackay of Rhynie, and William Robertson Nicoll was the eldest son of the Rev. Harry Nicoll of Auchendoir. These were at once homes of Christianity and of culture.

[1] Page 223.

[2] *Recreations of a Book-Lover*, by Frederic W. Macdonald, p.20 (Hodder & Stoughton).

The manse of Sir William Robertson Nicoll's father contained "the most remarkable private library in Scotland." Miss Stoddart says: "By judicious purchasing and patient waiting, Mr. Nicoll succeeded during his life of nearly eighty years in accumulating 17,000 volumes—an almost miraculous achievement when we remember that his income never reached £200 a year. In later life he began to buy duplicates, for, as he said to his son, 'You are never really safe with one copy of a good book.' Every shilling which he could spare from a strictly frugal life went to the enlargement of his library. He bought with the help of second-hand catalogues, and half a crown was usually the highest price he paid. He never bought books as curiosities and could seldom afford a rare edition. Yet in his collection there were volumes which represented a real sacrifice. His beautiful set of Locke, for example, has the price marked on it in pencil, £4 13s. A book which Mr. Nicoll greatly admired was Pearson on the Creed, and he purchased each edition as it appeared, till his library contained nine."[1]

The home was a school of culture. Again and again Sir William Nicoll has written about it. In one of his articles, he said: "Our village contained, when I was a child, about five hundred people and eleven thousand books."

We are grateful for a look within this wonderful manse. "In the long winter evenings Mr. Nicoll

[1] *W. Robertson Nicoll, L.L.D.*, by Jane T. Stoddart, pp. 10, 11 (S. W. Partridge & Co.).

allowed his eldest son to read beside him at the study table. . . He wisely gave his boy no directions whatever as to the choice of books. The wide field of literature lay open before him, for this was no mere haphazard collection, but a real library. . . Dr. Nicoll's favourite books as a child were 'The Arabian Nights,' 'Frankenstein,' and, above all, 'Don Quixote.' . . . . At an early age he had read many standard English authors. He knew the novels of Scott, Bulwer Lytton and Disraeli, also the masterpieces of American literature, the works of Emerson, Longfellow, Lowell, and Bryant. . . . . The library was rich in eighteenth century literature, and he sometimes says that at fourteen he knew the writings of Johnson, Addison, Steele and Goldsmith, better than he knows them to-day. . . . . The love of poetry was at first awakened through the reading of a snatch of song from Allan Cunningham. . . . . His favourite novelists were Scott and Charlotte Brontë. . . . All the Manse children dearly loved the Brontës, for it seemed to them that the life in the wild moorland parsonage of Haworth must in many respects have resembled their own."[1]

There is no name in Methodism more honoured than that of Moulton. We are familiar with the "life" of William F. Moulton, the great headmaster of the Leys School, a member of the New Testament Revision Committee and the friend of some of the greatest Englishmen of his day. We prize also the memoir of his son, James Hope

[1] Pages 20-23.

Moulton. In his Essay on "Culture" Emerson has this prescient word. "Culture cannot begin too early. . . . . The chance for appreciation is much increased by being the son of an appreciator, and that these boys who now grow up are caught not only years too late, but two or three births too late, to make the best scholars of."

Think of the heritage of religion and culture which came to Professor James Hope Moulton! His brother traces it back to John Bakewell, the contemporary of John Wesley, and one of his preachers. He was the author of the hymn: "Hail, Thou once despisèd Jesus!" His daughter married James Egan, an assistant-master in his school. Their daughter became the wife of William Moulton. Three of his sons followed him in the Wesleyan ministry, James Egan Moulton being the eldest. He was a remarkable man. "He was certainly a great student, remarkable both for the thoroughness of his knowledge and for its extraordinary breadth. He was a mathematician above the average; he had an extensive knowledge of Greek and Latin authors, and he 'could read Hebrew like a Jew.'"[1]

His sons were famous. They were Dr. W. F. Moulton of the Leys, Dr. J. E. Moulton of Sydney, N.S.W., The Right Hon. Lord Moulton of Bank, K.C.B., and Dr. R. G. Moulton of Chicago.

All these family strains were united in James Hope Moulton. There were the Moultons, Hopes,

[1] *William F. Moulton*, by W. Fiddian Moulton, p. 19 (Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd.).

Fiddians, Egans, and on his marriage there were the Osborn and Keeling families.

And he was worthy of his heritage. His closest friends were the most conscious of the singular beauty of his life and the reality of his culture. To us the most illuminating thing in this Memoir are the verses written when he was in India and enclosed in one of his letters. They were scribbled on a half-sheet of paper. The verses were penned at Bangalore where he had been lecturing in what he called "A Black Didsbury."

At the Classroom Door.

"Lord, at Thy word opens yon door, inviting
Teacher and taught to feast this hour with Thee;
Opens a Book where God in human writing
Thinks His deep thoughts, and dead tongues live for me.

"Too dread the task, too great the duty calling,
Too heavy far the weight is laid on me!
O if mine own thought should on Thy words falling
Mar the great message, and men hear not Thee!

"Give me Thy voice to speak, Thine ear to listen,
Give me Thy mind to grasp Thy mystery;
So shall my heart throb, and my glad eyes glisten,
Rapt with the wonders Thou dost show to me."[1]

Surely this is the Christian religion and this is culture!

There are thousands of poor homes in which the power of Christianity in promoting culture has been and is being proved. It is true of all the churches and certainly true of Primitive Methodism. It is the glory of our fellowship that religion has sanctified the home. In all parts of the land

[1] *James Hope Moulton*, by his Brother, p. 97 (The Epworth Press).

there are homes, ideal homes, full of affection and fidelity and the most beauteous helpfulness. We have been in hundreds of them, the homes of operatives, farmers and farm-labourers, fishermen and miners, the homes of the many types of toilers who make up our communion.

In many of these homes there is a true love of culture and culture itself in varying degrees. There is the love of books and the knowledge of them. Music is enjoyed and proficiency in execution sought. There is the love of Poetry and an appreciation of Art. Because these families are in love with Christ they are in love with the purest things of thought and ambition.

It is significant that from these homes men and women have sprung who are devoted to culture. Reared as sons and daughters in these homes they have from their earliest years been inspired to the love of Thought in all its many and varied exercises. The majority of our ministers have come from such homes. Our greatest and most honoured teachers were thus advantaged. Our lay officials for the most part have been nurtured in such surroundings.

We think of men and women well known in the world of Music, others in Science, some in Art and others in Literature who gratefully acknowledge that all they are they owe to these humble homes in which Christianity was loved and culture desired. There was never any feeling of incongruity in these homes between the life of religion and the pursuit of scholarship. To find culture

it was never necessary to break away from the Christian rule. Rather the spirit of the Christian religion as seen and enjoyed was the continuous inspiration to the noblest self-development.

Primitive Methodists are justly proud of James Flanagan. Without doubt he was one of the most successful evangelists. He was the founder of the South-East London Mission. St. George's Hall is an abiding monument of his advocacy and zeal. There is no exaggeration in describing him as a man of culture. How did he come to such marvellous self-development? He owed it all to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was twenty-one years of age before he was converted and he was already married. His conversion was not only a moral and spiritual transformation but a mental awakening. His biographer states the simple yet wonderful truth.

"He could not write his name nor distinguish the letters of the alphabet. He was a little child in the school of Knowledge and his vocabulary consisted of the vulgarities of the public-house. He decided, therefore, to gain lost ground and redeem the wasted years. He learned afresh the alphabet and enriched his vocabulary with the language of religion. Thirsting for knowledge, he burnt the midnight oil and conquered the elements of grammar. Early in the morning he rose to read and pray, and embraced every opportunity of self-improvement. The progress Flanagan made was remarkable. He quickly acquired the elements of education and soon became familiar with the

higher ranges of knowledge. The Bible became his companion and the works of human genius his friends. Nothing was allowed to stand in the way of his upward march."[1]

What is true of Primitive Methodism is true of the other churches. We have been deeply interested and richly profited in the reading of Sir Henry Jones's *Old Memories*. The truth of our contention is all aflame in these most wondrous pages. Could any home be simpler than the one in which he was reared? "It consisted of one room downstairs measuring about ten feet each way, and a room of the same size and shape upstairs. The ceiling was about six feet high with its whitewashed rafters."[2]

He became Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow.

What a tribute he pays to his parents!

"My father was the village shoemaker; not a cobbler, be it noted, whose grade is decisively lower; for my father made new boots as well as mended old ones. My mother, before her marriage, had been servant maid in a succession of farms. She was the prettiest brunette, I was told, in all the country round, and known everywhere for her cleverness and sprightliness.

"Better blood than mine could run in no child's veins. It was not blue; but it was red with the

[1] *The Life of James Flanagan*, by R. W. Russell, pp. 22, 23 (The Holborn Publishing House).

[2] *Old Memories*, by Sir Henry Jones, p. 18 (Hodder & Stoughton).

healthy redness of simple lives led in the open-air. And, so far as I ever heard, there was among my progenitors not a single liar, or coward, or sneak, or lounger, or hard and unkind man. All my ancestors whose story I can trace were either farmers or farm-labourers—except my father . . .

"My mother, her father and her father's father, and, I believe, my grandmother and great-grandmother, also, were deeply religious. . . . . They were 'members' of their church, and not merely 'hearers' or 'adherents.' . . . . The 'members' were a select few, who stayed behind for more intimate spiritual communion when the mass of the congregation walked out at the end of the sermon. . . . .

"A 'Slack' job never passed through my father's hands, or through those of any of his eight brothers and sisters. I adore his memory; and I will not promise what I cannot perform, namely, to speak of him in measured terms. My mother was religious. Her mind had an imaginative reach which my father's had not; and if ever man or woman was endowed with that kind of intuitive power which, psychologists say, reaches true conclusions without the help of any premises, it was my mother. . . . . My mother was imaginative and æsthetic and intuitive to the finger-tips; and she was extraordinarily clever. My parents, between them, gave to me and to my two older brothers and my single sister, a first-rate upbringing."[1]

[1] Pages 9-17.

But the love and pursuit of culture were there in that little Welsh home.

"My eldest brother, William, came out second in the United Kingdom in an examination held by *The Society of Arts and Sciences* in the subjects of 'Fruit and Vegetable Culture' and 'Floriculture.' My next brother, John, came out easily first in the Kingdom, in a similar examination held some years later by the same society. And at the earliest allowable age, and while still a working shoemaker, I passed out of the same noisy and restless little kitchen into the Normal College for Schoolmasters at Bangor, at the head of the college list, and first in the Kingdom of all the non-pupil-teacher candidates."[1]

It is the glory of our land that there are thousands of Christian homes where Christ is the abiding presence, the greatest reality of faith and experience, and in these homes the things of the intellect are admired and all the precious acquirements we mean by culture.

Some of these homes were obscure, many might think the last places in which to expect them. We think of several but of two in particular. When we ministered among the miners in the County of Durham we had the privilege of the friendship of John Williamson of Brandon Colliery. He was a miner all his days but even the men with whom he worked knew that his real life was in other spheres. He was a Primitive Methodist local preacher, with an extraordinary insight into

[1] Pages 28, 29.

spiritual subjects and an original mind and speech in expounding them. He was a great lover of poetry, an authority on Burns and the composer of tuneful lines himself. It was an education to converse with him. He was one of the most truly cultured men we have met.

The other of whom we think lived practically all his life in a secluded hamlet in Northumberland. For long years John Hall was the steward of the Hallington demesne. The hamlet was indeed "far from the madding crowd." He built a little chapel for the villagers and taught every Lord's Day in the Sunday School with his sister and his niece. At least once a quarter we were there and the hours spent in his home are among the most fragrant and precious of our memories. What a student and lover of books he was! What an extraordinary knowledge he had of them! He knew poetry. His mind was responsive to everything that was true and beautiful. It was difficult sometimes to induce him to talk. He was readier to listen than to speak. But sometimes out of the treasures of his mind he enriched the eager hearer. Some might have pitied him living in such an obscure place. We are sure that he was never conscious that he needed pity. He had all he needed on earth there. The sky was there and the fields and fells. He loved the few neighbours of the hamlet and he had his trust to fulfil, the care of the hall and the estate for the absent owner. And then he had his books, especially the Bible. We can see him now as we saw him last. He had walked with

us through the woods to the highway for the town. We did not know then whether we should ever meet again. We never did, but we think of him now as a true Christian gentleman and one of the élite of the cultured.

So we rejoice in the pre-eminence of our Lord. To say that He has impressed the mind of the world is but to hint at the truth. He has "ploughed" His Name into the consciousness of men. He is the Life. He came to give life. We see how manifold is the life He imparts and inspires. It is the life of the richest culture. Christianity is culture.

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